

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING FOR POVERTY  
REDUCTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN MTHATHA,  
SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis, titled: **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN MTHATHA, SOUTH AFRICA** is my own original work and that all the sources that I have used or cited in this study, have been fully acknowledged by means of a complete reference list and that this thesis has not been submitted to any university or institution of higher learning for any other degree.

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Signature

20-02-2020

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I have dedicated this work to:

My beloved wife, Doreen Oppong Tawiah, whose sacrifices have made me what I am today;

My beloved children, Kelvin Aboagye Tawiah; Princess Pearl Gyasiwaa Tawiah and Beauty Lee-Ann Frimpomaa Tawiah, for sacrificing the attention that they deserved from me as a father; and

My parents Anna and Sampson Tawiah (senior) for their care and support in my educational life

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All who knowingly and unknowingly assisted me on this academic journey.

*Enkosi!!*

*Thank You!!*

*SAMPSON TAWIAH*

## ABSTRACT

Women constitute the largest proportion of the rural adult South African population. The rural areas host women with the lowest levels of education and skills training in the country. The lack of basic education and skills has resulted in many of them being marginalised, rejected and discriminated against, unemployed and living in poverty. These social problems have serious negative effects on them and their families, which is why the educational provision of Adult and Community Education and Training in South Africa is a significant tool for their socio-economic advancement. This educational provision is aimed at empowering adults in general, and rural women in particular, with the necessary livelihood skills to lead productive lives and consequently the study sought to investigate the socio-economic lives of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction in the Mthatha area of South Africa. A qualitative research approach and an exploratory design were employed for the study. A sample of 35 participants, comprising 20 female learners, 4 educators, and 7 former learners were in addition to 4 learners selected for a focus group discussion. Other instruments with which data were collected constituted in-depth individual interviews and documentary analysis. The theories underpinning the study are Maslow's theory of motivation, empowerment theory and critical pedagogy. Among others, the findings revealed the absence of adequate resources with which to empower rural women and consequently the study recommends that Adult and Community Education and Training providers include programmes that can up-skill rural women based at community learning centres in an effort to enhance their economic development. Community learning centres must be fully resourced in terms of facilities and appropriate learning tools to render Adult and Community Education and Training a beneficial educational intervention for these rurally based women.

**Keywords:** Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET); adult education; skills training; socio-economic development; poverty; rural women

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>ABE</b>	Adult Basic Education
<b>ABET</b>	Adult Basic Education and Training
<b>ACET</b>	Adult and Community Education and Training
<b>AET</b>	Adult Education and Training
<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>BEE</b>	Black Economic Empowerment
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CLCs</b>	Community Learning Centres
<b>DHET</b>	Department of Higher Education and Training
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NPDE</b>	National Professional Diploma in Education
<b>PSET</b>	Post-School Education and Training
<b>TVET</b>	Technical Vocational Education and Training
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UPE</b>	Universal Primary Education
<b>WP-PSET</b>	White Paper for Post-School Education and Training

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research project aimed to explore socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction in the Mthatha district of South Africa. The generic term 'Adult Education' is used more frequently in this study as it encompasses other terms such as Adult Basic Education (ABE) (UNESCO, 1980:2), Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) (DoE, 1997b:11), Adult Education and Training (AET) (Mayombe & Lombard, 2015:611) and Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) (DHET, 2013a:1), all of which form the basis of the study and with specific reference to South Africa.

The present chapter includes an introduction and background to the study, and presents the study's research problem, rationale, questions, aims and objectives. It also expounds on the significance of the study and sketches its delimitations. Key terms and concepts used in the study are explained and the chapter divisions are clearly indicated.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The role of education to enhance women's empowerment, to provide skills training and to reduce poverty is an important element of the development of any nation. It is for this reason that education has been given priority in many developing countries, particularly South Africa. In this country many people, particularly rural women, lack basic education, skills, are unemployed and live in poverty (Mayer, Gordhan, Manxeba, Hughes, Feley & Maroc, 2011:7). Their search for tutelage and skills training to enhance poverty reduction and to attain empowerment and socio-economic development are merely dreams. To correct these ills, however, adult education is used as an instrument to bring about social change and transformation (UNESCO, 2009a:24). Socio-political movements in recent times have used adult education as a powerful means to empower

the poor with knowledge and skills for survival (Shor, 2012:15). It is in this light, for example, that socialist Julius Nyerere used adult education as a tool to empower the poor with knowledge and skills for self- and community development (Nyerere, 1973, cited by Kamando, 2014:23).

Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) (DHET, 2013a:1) in particular is provided in South Africa to provide for educationally underprivileged individuals, especially for rural women. This provision is aimed at improving the women's socio-economic lives by enabling them with knowledge and skills for them to improve their living conditions. Many rural women, however, are living in poor conditions because of lacking basic education and skills. The researcher argues that where ACET has failed to have positive developmental effects on these women, they are left to live in perpetual poverty, hence motivating the investigation into the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction in the Mthatha area.

According to UNESCO (2009a:24), having equal opportunity and access to education is an important means to enhance social cohesion and to reduce social inequalities in any country. In addition, opportunities to education allow for an increase in the economy (UNESCO, 2009a:24) essentially with regard to universal primary education (UPE). In other words, having equal access to adult education programmes like ACET is crucial for solving socio-economic difficulties such as unemployment, discrimination, marginalisation and poverty. Against this backdrop, the researcher opines that when women receive a better education and training they can be better placed to improve their standard of living. Blanden, Sturgis, Buscha and Urwin (2009:4) support the view that education is vital in the lives of people, rural women in particular. The authors contend that when rural women are educated and appropriately skilled, they can have access to gainful employment, are able to venture into self-employment activities and can bring about improvement in their social and economic status (Blanden et al., 2009:4). Unfortunately, many of them lack basic education and training which ensues in unemployment, marginalisation and poverty.

Living in poverty, sadly, comes with harmful circumstances. For example, women are prone to abuse, diseases, lack of knowledge to protect and care for themselves and their families. There is a need for them to be educated and skilled, particularly through ACET, so as to liberate themselves from these social glitches. According to Mirowsky (2017:2), it is generally assumed that adults who are well-educated are in a better position to take responsibility for health issues and to care for themselves to combat harmful illnesses efficiently through healthy lifestyle such as exercise and the reduction of fat intake. In support of Mirowsky, educated adults are in the best position to read and acquire knowledge about family planning choices and how to care for children. Indeed, better educated adults, especially women, stand a better chance of freeing themselves from social problems like diseases, unemployment and poverty. The researcher argues that if women participate in ACET programmes, many of them will have higher self-esteem, the ability to tackle social issues and confidence in their own abilities to reduce poverty. In view of the benefits that ACET programmes have to offer and for women to take control of their social and economic lives, the providers of ACET programmes should ensure that these programmes are appropriate in that they have the ability to up-skill women in disadvantaged communities.

South Africa has seen an increase in the number of rural women who lack education and skills for an improved livelihood. This condition is mostly found in the rural areas. A study conducted by Jiyane and Mostert (2010:1) indicates that the problem of a lack of skills is concentrated mostly in the rural communities where the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is poor. This suggests that women, especially those who aspire to be entrepreneurs in South Africa, need to be trained in ICT skills and increase their knowledge in business-oriented activities so that they can compete successfully in the economy. The world is a global village in which there is competition for economic success. The provision of appropriate skills through ACET is crucial, therefore, for rural women to compete effectively and successfully in the South African economy.

Education is instrumental in the achievement of the developmental goals of citizens in any country, especially those citizens located in the rural areas. On the contrary, in South Africa, for example, many women in rural communities are disadvantaged through their lack of educational prospects. Yet, education and skills training are important to the development of women in rural communities; to ensure employment/self-employment, and to allow for an engagement in income-generating projects. According to Holmes and Jones (2010:54), skills development is essential to the productive value of women; through increasing their chance of employability and maintaining a sustainable income to improve their social and economic status. Pathetically, though, women in rural areas lack education and skills training, this hindering their performance in the economy. As a result, many rural women are unemployed and have failed to contribute meaningfully in the socio-economic development of themselves, their families and the community as a whole (Månsson & Färnsveden, 2012:7).

A survey conducted by Statistic South Africa (2019) revealed that the unemployment rate in South Africa has increased from 27,1% in 2018 to 27,6% in 2019. This unemployment figures means that the underprivileged, especially have little or no access to economic opportunities and cannot satisfy basic life needs such as water, food, clothing and shelter. Indeed, these high levels of unemployment and inequality demand quick intervention by the government. For this reason, according to Gardiner (2008:26), ABET, and for purposes of this study, ACET (DHET, 2013a:1) programmes have been established to assist the disadvantaged individuals in society, particularly rural women, to deal with their social and economic issues. Some of these programmes constitute the empowerment of women through skills training.

In democratic South Africa, therefore, ACET is seen as a crucial tool to equip rural women with the necessary livelihood skills to reduce poverty. Unfortunately, many of the women are still plagued with the problem of lacking education and skills, resulting in poor living conditions. The situation of women living in poverty is so pressing that the former president of the country, Thabo Mbeki, made the following critical observation:

“It is therefore, impossible to say that the dignity of people is restored as long as the situation still persists. For this reason, the struggle to eradicate poverty has been, and continues to be a central part of the national effort to build the new South Africa” (Mbeki, 2005).

This national agenda is of serious concern to both past and current governments and the citizens of the country. Importantly, ACET programmes are being provided in many rural South African communities. The evidence provided in the literature shows that there are still high levels of unemployment, a lack of skills and widespread poverty which continue taking a toll on women in rural communities in the country. The belief is that if rural women are given access and opportunities to ACET programmes, they can be trained with practical skills to engage fully in social and economic activities in order to lead better lives.

For the sake of humanity and with specific reference to the spirit of ‘*Ubuntu*,’ rural women must be given access to ACET programmes. According to Johnson and Quan-Baffour (2016:1), Ubuntu is a term used in South Africa which means forgiveness. Ewuoso and Hall (2019) in a review paper further indicated that Ubuntu is an African philosophy where people live together in friendliness, help and depend on each other during difficulties. According to Nolte and Downing (2019), Ubuntu refers to individuals who have welcoming attitudes, generous, caring willing to share what they have with others for a common good. These authors are of the view that if oneness forms part of the human race, then we will be moved to perform good deeds to each other. This good ensures rural women access to better education and appropriate skills training for socio-economic development and poverty reduction and should move the providers of ACET programmes to provide appropriate content that can empower the women with the necessary livelihood skills to participate in the country’s economy. In doing so the principle of ‘*Ubuntu*’ is administered to alleviate the predicament of women in rural communities. The spirit of ‘*Ubuntu*’ led to the researcher’s decision to embark on this scientific inquiry, hence the formulation of the topic below:



# SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN MTHATHA, SOUTH AFRICA.

## **1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM**

### **1.3.1 Researcher's observations**

Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) involves the teaching and training of individuals who were educationally disadvantaged during apartheid rule. Some of these individuals were categorised as people who had never received any schooling but also as those who went to school, but did not complete their primary education (Aitchison, 2006:91). The ill condition of apartheid left many black citizens of South Africa, particularly rural women, without education and skill, meaning that many of them became illiterate members of society. The number of illiterate and unskilled people, as at the time of South Africa's independence, stood at 12 million out of the population of black South Africans living in the country (Quan-Baffour, 2012:91). However, according to Statistic South Africa (2018:10), the number of uneducated South African has decreased by 26,7%. Indeed, to get rural women into the socio-economic arena of the country, political intervention became critical. One of such interventions in South Africa is ACET (DHET, 2013a; 2017) which aimed to address the knowledge and skills gap of millions of adults, particularly rural women.

Against this background, the researcher has observed that the lack of basic education and skills is concentrated mostly in rural communities where he has been working as an educator for the past 10 years and is involved with the provision of basic education to youths and adults in the rural formal school system. The lack of basic education and skills among rural women in Mthatha has resulted in many of them living in abject poverty. This informed the researcher's desire to explore the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction in the area.

As mentioned above, ACET is the machinery that can be used in response to the predicament of rural women. The researcher is moved by the sentiments of rural women. Based on his experience and observation of the poor conditions in which rural women find themselves, he is moved to use this research to:

- 1) Emphasise the importance of making ACET programmes relevant to rural women by providing hands-on skills with which they can change their life circumstances;
- 2) Help link ACET programmes to the job market so that rural women can apply the new skills acquired in the workplace and earn an income to improve their economic living conditions;
- 3) Help stress the need to develop appropriate curricula as well as teaching and learning support tools for learners and educators; and
- 4) Help stress the need to establish and upgrade existing ACET centres.

### **1.3.2 Assumptions underpinning the study**

As emphasised, the researcher is involved with basic education in a rural community. He has been teaching youth and adults in the formal school system for the past 10 years. In this he has observed and come to understand the predicament of women in the countryside. From a detailed reading of relevant literature on women's issues, the following assumptions are stated:

- ❖ This exploratory study of rural women can create awareness of the deplorable socio-economic conditions of women living in rural communities. This calls for drastic interventions to be made by government to address the identified problems;
- ❖ ACET programmes in and around the country do not meet the learning needs of women in rural communities. Consequently, many rural women lack the skills needed in the job market. Therefore, this exploratory study can help to stress the

need for appropriate skills training for women in rural communities as a pathway to employment and/or self-employment;

- ❖ The educators at ACET centres are not sufficiently resourced and skilled to impart the much-needed skills to women at the centres. This has harmed learners' trust in the ACET programmes as the only gateway to socio-economic freedom;
- ❖ Poverty is a major problem experienced by women living in rural communities. Hence, to be free from poverty, women should receive skills training so that they can be employable and/or be self-employed. In this way they can generate income to improve their economic conditions.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Unemployment, poverty and vulnerability affect millions of women in the developing world owing to lack of education and skills. The empowerment of rural women through skills training for economic growth and to reduce poverty is, therefore, a national concern in South Africa. As a resident in a rural area of the Eastern Cape, the researcher has observed how a lack of employment has negatively affected many women socially and economically. The attempt to understand the situation better and suggest solutions motivated him to engage in this study. He realises that training through adult education should be one of South Africa's priorities (McKay, 2007:9), and that ACET in particular has the potential to develop the country's citizenry, particular that of rural women, to handle socio-economic challenges (Fieuw, 2011:170). The main problem that this study investigated is: **what is the socio-economic condition and skills level of rural women in Mthatha, South Africa?** The sub-problems are formulated in the following statements:

- ❖ There is lack of empowerment of women in rural South Africa.
- ❖ There is lack of skills development amongst women in rural South African communities.

- ❖ There is low social and economic development amongst women in rural South Africa.
- ❖ There is a high rate of poverty amongst illiterate women in rural South Africa.

#### **1.4.1 Research questions**

In an attempt to find solutions to the problems stated in 1.4 above, the study endeavoured to answer the following research questions:

- ❖ How can ACET contribute to the empowerment of rural women?
- ❖ What is the role of ACET in rural women's skills development?
- ❖ How can ACET contribute to rural women's economic development?
- ❖ To what extent can ACET assist in poverty reduction among rural women?

#### **1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

With reference to the problems stated in 1.4 above, the objectives below were formulated for the study. They are to:

- ❖ Establish how ACET can contribute to the empowerment of rural women in the Mthatha area.
- ❖ Determine the role of ACET in the skills development of rural women in mthatha.
- ❖ Investigate the extent of rural women's economic development in the Mthatha area.
- ❖ Assess the extent to which ACET can contribute to poverty reduction of rural women in Mthatha.

#### **1.6 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) is crucial for the socio-economic development of people, particularly rural women. This is because many of them lack

basic education and training. The high rate of poverty that exists among women in rural communities is a result of this lack of education and skills. Gardiner (2008:11) emphasises that the provision of AET by the South African government failed to provide the much-needed skills for rural women to improve their livelihood. It is for this reason that the government has revamped AET to replace it with ACET (Baatjes & Baatjes, 2008:17-18; DHET, 2013a:1), in order to empower rural women with relevant skills for improving their livelihood and dealing with their socio-economic challenges. To ascertain whether ACET is achieving this important goal necessitates the present investigation into the socio-economic lives of rural women in the Mthatha area.

Women constitute the largest portion of the adult population who are less educated, lack skills, are unemployed and poverty-stricken (John, 2019:192-193). Mashau and Houghton (2015:596) affirm that women are confronted with the problem of lack of skills, poor economic development, unemployment and poverty, which is distressingly high in South Africa. These two researchers suggest that rural women are to be educated and skilled if we are to win the war on unemployment and poverty. Although ACET programmes are implemented in the country nationwide, its developmental effects are not noticeable in the lives of the women, particularly those in rural areas. This is because most of the ACET centres are not empowering their learners with skills for survival. The fact that many women, particularly rural dwellers, are still faced with the challenges of lacking basic education and skills, unemployment and poverty justifies this investigation. The researcher argues that if rural women are not trained in relevant skills through ACET programmes they will not be capable of caring for themselves and carrying the economic responsibilities of their households. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the socio-economic lives of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction in the study environment.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is intended to contribute to the knowledge and practice of Adult Education by understanding how ACET programmes can be streamlined for the empowerment of

women, skills training, poverty reduction and socio-economic development. These objectives are positioned in the framework of empowerment theory and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Also, the study is intended to attach importance to the effective training of people, especially women who are involved in ACET programmes as this can benefit them in employment, help them to engage in a business of their own or self-employment, and to economically develop themselves, their families and the communities in which they live.

In the light of the above discussion, the study anticipated to:

- ❖ Stress the importance of making ACET programmes relevant to the demands of the labour market and provide adult learners with appropriate skills which can be applied to the production of goods and services and to generate income to improve the living conditions of rural women;
- ❖ Help correlate ACET programmes with the job market to enable graduates to apply their acquired skills in employment opportunities in the South African economy;
- ❖ Stress the need to develop appropriate curricula and teaching and learning support resources for both learners and educators in ACET institutions; and
- ❖ Stress the need to establish and upgrade existing ACET centres, not just in and around the study area, but in the country as a whole. This can increase the recognition of ACET centres and improve adults' trust in the institutions as a means to providing much-needed skills to deliver rural women from poverty.

## **1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY**

Delimitations spell out the scope of the present study (Simon & Goes, 2013:4). In this sense, the present study is concerned with exploring the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction. The researcher thus limited the study to the social and economic development of rural women. Furthermore, he

focused only on skills training for poverty reduction in the Mthatha district. This scope of investigation is justified based on the fact that:

- ❖ ACET programmes are established in the area to solve women's persisting problems of insufficient skills training, unemployment, poverty, a lack of empowerment and socio-economic development. The fact that the majority of women in the area are still faced with these problems necessitates this investigation;
- ❖ The problem of skills training, unemployment, as well as the social and economic development of the rural women in this study is the problem of many similar rural communities. Therefore, the results of the study can be extrapolated to these other rural communities.

## 1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS USED IN THE STUDY

It is essential to explicate the main terms and concepts which feature in the title of the study: *“Socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction: an exploratory study of rural women in Mthatha, South Africa”*, as well as others used by the researcher. The list below expounds on the terms and concepts employed throughout the study:

- ❖ **Skills**, as the term is used in the study, are considered from the perspective of Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) and Adult Education and Training (AET), both which spell out skills as a means for better living. ACET level four is the crucial phase involved in this study which involves training of disadvantaged unemployed adults, especially rural women in the field of agriculture, as well as technical and entrepreneurial skills (DHET, 2013b:1; KZN DoE, 2012:13).
- ❖ **Training** denotes a condition where individuals, particularly women, are given some form of skills training or practice in a given skill or subject which enables

them to take part in the economy through either being employed and/or self-employed.

- ❖ **Development** refers to improvement in all spheres of life, e.g. economic, social, and political, with the aim to reduce or eliminate poverty, inequity, discrimination, insecurity, ecological imbalances, and unemployment and to improve the quality of women's lives (Prins, 2008:25).
- ❖ **Economic development** means equipping rural women with desirable and relevant skills for a better livelihood. This can help them to become economically active in order to improve their living circumstances.
- ❖ **Poverty** refers to the majority of women who are struggling with the basic necessities of life (needs) such as clothing, shelter, good drinking water and food, and who consequently find their life an unbearable situation (Sengupta, 2008:13).
- ❖ **Empowerment** is the process of developing people (women in particular) in all aspects of their lives to reduce poverty (Griggs et al., 2013:307).
- ❖ **Education** refers to the provision of education to acquire knowledge, skills and values that rural women need in their daily lives to enable them to participate in the socio-economic, cultural and political activities of the community (Erasmus, 2010:2).
- ❖ **Adult Basic Education** encompasses the broad term 'Adult Education.' This term was defined by UNESCO as the:

*... entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether it prolongs or replaces initial education in school, colleges and universities as in apprenticeship, by which persons regarded as adult by society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development (UNESCO 1980:2).*



UNESCO's definition indicates that the broad term 'adult education' embraces all forms of education. This includes adult learning in formal, informal and non-formal educational systems. For purposes of this study adult education takes place in a formal school setup. Here, teaching and learning are organised in a systematic manner and the women concerned are taught to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to create better living conditions.

- ❖ **Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)** is the term used by the South African national Department of Education (DoE) to describe adult basic education where education and training have been integrated. ABET has four levels, which links to grades 9 of the formal school system as verified in the DoE policy on ABET (1997b:30). ABET as a concept is defined as;

*... the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally, provides access to nationally recognized certificates (DoE 1997b:11).*

ABET was designed specifically with the disadvantaged members of society in mind, particularly rural women, to access the education they never had. This can help them acquire knowledge and skills for their social and economic development.

- ❖ **Adult Education and Training (AET)** is the term adopted by the national DoE (DoE, 2010, cited in Mayombe & Lombard, 2015:611). This term features alongside others that are similar and with particular reference to South Africa.
- ❖ **Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET)** is a new term that has been adopted by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (DHET, 2013a:1) and which features most frequently in this study.
- ❖ **Adult Education** is the broader term that encompasses others such as Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), Adult

Education and Training (AET), and Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET); the last of these featuring most strongly in the present investigation.

- ❖ **Adult**, as defined psychologically, refers to individuals who are responsible for their own lives and actions as directed by them (Knowles, 1996, cited in Jurchen, 2020:18). In this research study, 'adults' refers to women who are responsible for their lives, households and their learning activities.
- ❖ **Adult learners** refer to individuals who are mature and independent, particularly women, who are involved in a study programme either to acquire new skills or to improve upon the skills already acquired.
- ❖ **Employment** as used in the study refers to a situation where one has paid work or is able to generate income. This includes being employed and/or engaging in a self-employed business or project which generates income (Erasmus, 2010:2). Stevenson (2010) defines paid work as constituting a fixed regular income earned for work or services rendered. Gale (2011:3) also defines self-employment using the example of trainees (in this case, women) who have established their own businesses or projects to generate income.
- ❖ **Empirical exploration** as used in this study denotes a research study which is conducted to uncover new knowledge and to determine the efficacy or viability of a strategy through experiments, testing, interviews and experiential contribution.
- ❖ **An approach** is the way or method of doing something. In this study the approach adopted was qualitative in nature.

## 1.10 SYNOPSIS OF METHODOLOGY

This empirical study was qualitative in nature and an exploratory design was employed to explore the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction in Mthatha, South Africa. This research approach and design was deemed appropriate because it helps us to better understand the lived experiences of the rural women under investigation (Creswell, 2014:4). A detailed discussion of the methodology is given in Chapter 3.

### **1.10.1 Research population**

The population of four ACET centres chosen as research sites for the study comprised of 450 adult learners (men and women). As the study focused on rural women only 400 women were selected as a population for the study. The population consists of adult learners who are involved in or have undergone the ACET programme.

### **1.10.2 Sample and sampling technique**

A purposive sample of 35 female learners/participants was considered appropriate for the study because they are directly linked to the phenomenon under study. The participants are individuals who had enrolled or gone through ACET programme at the purposively selected four (4) ACET learning centres in the Mthatha area of South Africa. Of the 35 participants, 20 female learners were purposively selected from different learning centres to participate in the study. As learners at the ACET centres they are in the best position to give dependable and rich information about ACET programmes. Four (4) female educators were purposively recruited to participate in the study because they were regarded by the researcher as information rich. In addition to these participants the researcher recruited seven (7) former ACET learners to participate in the study. As graduates of the programme they were in a better position to give rich information about ACET courses. Four (4) more participants were purposively selected from different learning centres to be engaged in focus group discussions. These measures were taken to ensure that only people who could provide correct, sufficient and rich information participated in the study. Since the study was qualitative in nature, the sample was deemed appropriate for the study (Niccolai, Hansen, Credle & Shapiro, 2016:843-844; Saunders, Sim, Kingstone, Baker, Waterfield, Bartlam, Burroughs & Jinks, 2018:1902). Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants from 4 ACET learning centres in Mthatha based on the following criteria:

- ❖ Educators must be female employees at ACET centres;
- ❖ Learners must be registered for tuition at the centres;

- ❖ Participants must be willing to be involved in the study;
- ❖ Participants must be information rich and committed to sharing reliable information; and
- ❖ Participants must have undergone the ACET programmes at the selected centres.

Using these criteria, the researcher selected suitable participants who were deemed to be information-rich for purposes of the study.

### **1.10.3 Instrumentation and data collection**

The instruments used to collect data for the study include interviews and documentary analysis. Interviews were conducted individually as well as in focus group format. Individual interviews allow for a relaxed atmosphere for participants to share their experiences. The focus group solicited different views and ideas from participants as they were selected from four different learning centres. Semi-structured in-depth individual and focus group interview guides were used by the researcher (see Appendices E, F, G & I). These guides helped the researcher to make reference to the research questions when necessary. The documentary analysis triangulated the findings from the individual interviews and focus group discussion.

### **1.10.4 Credibility and trustworthiness**

In conducting any research study there is a need for the study to be credible and trustworthy. The researcher ensured credibility through a number of techniques. One of the techniques used by the researcher constitutes peer debriefing. He used this technique to get guidance from experienced researchers, particularly his promoter. The promoter guided him to improve the quality of the findings. This technique is affirmed by Hadi and Closs (2016:6) in that peer debriefing helps give researchers the needed support to test and improve the quality of their findings. Triangulation was also used by the researcher to make the study credible. He triangulated the findings by using

different research instruments to collect data. These include in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis. 'Member check' is another technique used to ensure credibility of the study. According to Anney (2014:277), member check means that the collection and interpretation of the data must be continuously checked as they are solicited from participants. This technique helped the researcher to eradicate bias when analysing and interpreting the data collected.

Researchers ensure trustworthiness by using strategies such as transferability, dependability, confirmability and credibility. This study used credibility to ensure trustworthiness. Pandey and Patnaik (2014:5747) support this strategy as an important means to establish trustworthiness in a qualitative study. In addition, a pilot study was conducted to test the effectiveness of the research questions and make changes where necessary. Another strategy used by the researcher to ensure trustworthiness is probing. Tracy (2010:846) emphasises that probing is crucial in measuring the social problem of participants and can improve the dependability of qualitative research. The researcher, therefore, used this approach to scrutinise both the study process and to ensure its trustworthiness.

#### **1.10.5 Ethical issues considered in the study**

Ethical considerations in a research study concerns the rights, values and respect given to participants before data is collected for the study (Creswell & Clark, 2011:201). The researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the University of South Africa (UNISA) before the study was conducted (see Appendix A). After obtaining this clearance certificate he wrote a letter of permission to the South African Department of Education as well as the Adult and Community Education and Training centres to seek permission to conduct the study (Tilley, Killins & Oosten, 2005:278) in the Mthatha district (see Appendices B & C). Participants voluntarily signed consent forms for agreeing to participate in the study (see Appendix H) and nobody was forced to participate. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Two other important ethics-related issues constitute the participants' right to anonymity and confidentiality. Tilley and Woodthorpe (2011:3) posit that anonymity in a research study involves removing or concealing the names of participants and research sites, and that information gathered might lead to the identification of participants or research sites. In order to ensure the participants' anonymity, identifying information was not collected from the participants. The researcher assured all participants that the information provided would be treated with strict confidentiality (World Medical Association, 2013:2192).

#### **1.10.6 Data analysis**

An inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data collected via the two instruments used in the study. The researcher grouped the participant responses under specific themes. These themes were later elaborated on to reach an acceptable understanding.

### **1.11 CHAPTER DIVISIONS**

This research study is divided into six chapters with the following content:

- ❖ Chapter 1 focuses on the orientation to the study. It discusses aspects such as the introduction, background to the study, research problem identified, the rationale of the study, research questions to be answered, aims of the study, the significance of the study, delimitations of the study, as well as definitions of key terms and concepts used in the study.
- ❖ Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study and reviews relevant literature. This review discussed apartheid policy and lack of basic education and skills for rural women; Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET), as well as community development and poverty alleviation among rural women.

- ❖ Chapter 3 discusses the study's research design and methodology. This consists of components such as the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling, instrumentation and data collection techniques, as well as the ethics issues considered in the study.
- ❖ Chapter 4 presents the data and the analyses thereof.
- ❖ Chapter 5 focuses on a discussion of the findings that emerged from the study.
- ❖ Chapter 6 discusses the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

## **1.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This research chapter discusses the orientation and general introduction to the study, and sketches its background. The research problem was identified, among others, as a lack of women's empowerment and their consequent failure to acquire relevant livelihood skills. This predicament has contributed to high unemployment and poverty rates amongst the majority of rural South African women. This chapter has also discussed the rationale of the study, the research questions and aims, the significance of the study, and has explained key terms and concepts.

The next chapter is devoted to the study's theoretical framework and literature review.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the orientation, general introduction and gave a background to the study. The research problem indicates that most rural women are not empowered for livelihood skills. This problem has contributed to the high rate of unemployment and poverty among the majority of them. The chapter also discussed the rationale of the study, the research questions and aims, the significance of the study and key terms and concepts were explained.

The present chapter is devoted to the theoretical framework and a review of the relevant literature. These two aspects form a very important component of any scholarly investigation, as they frame and direct the study.

#### **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Baloyi (2014:1065), any research project without a theoretical framework is a meaningless exercise. Hence, the researcher has devoted this section of the present chapter to a discussion of the theories which underpin the study. He sought, therefore, to discuss the following:

- ❖ Maslow's theory of motivation;
- ❖ Critical pedagogy; and
- ❖ Empowerment theory.

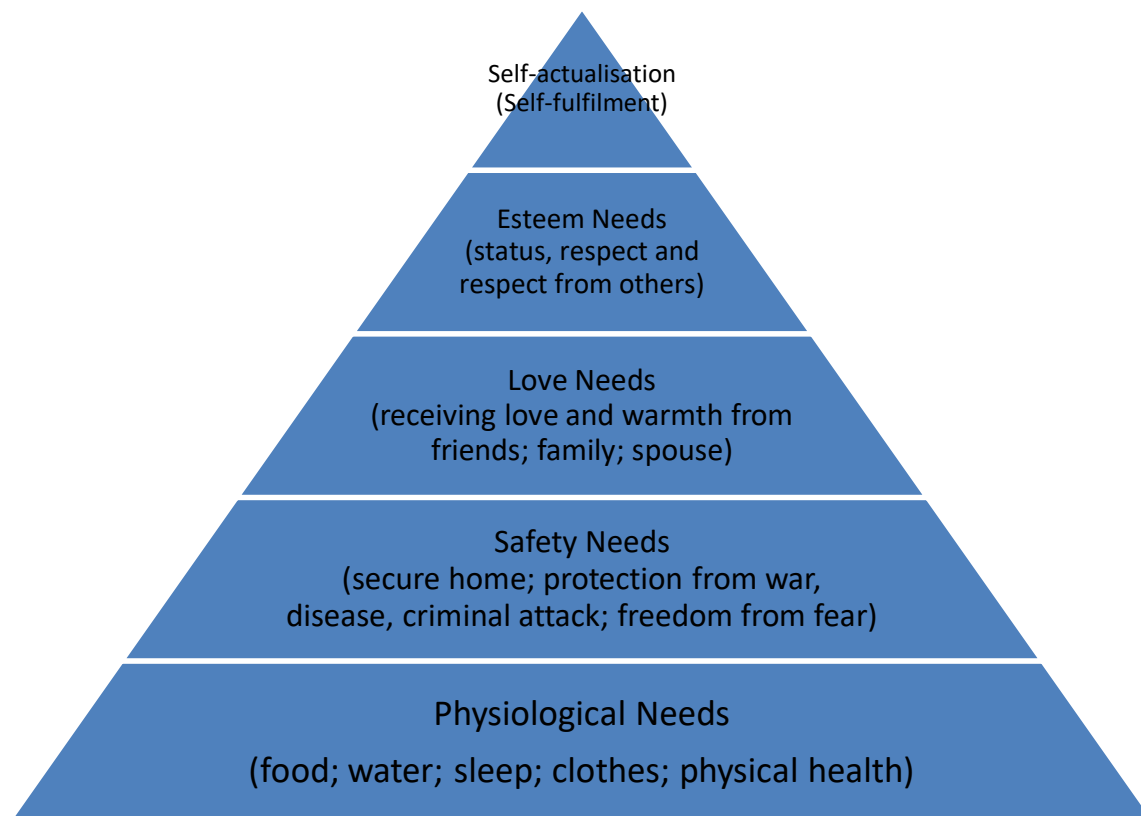


### 2.2.1 Maslow's theory of motivation

An important theory that underpins this study is that of Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation. The theory was first developed and gained recognition in the year 1943 and he proposed that the success or survival of humans is motivated by a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943:372). These needs are linked from one stage to another (perhaps based on order of importance) or they follow a sequential order. Maslow presented this order as follows:

- ❖ Physiological needs;
- ❖ Safety needs;
- ❖ Love, belongingness or affection needs;
- ❖ Esteem needs; and
- ❖ Self-actualisation needs.

These needs are arranged sequentially and hierarchically in a pyramid (Einstein, 2016:1-2; Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017:164). This is indicated in figure 2.1 below:



**Fig 2.1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)**

**Source:** (Maslow, 1954)

The order of importance of these needs is indicated as may be seen from the broader base of the pyramid upwards. At the beginning stage of this order, the needs of individuals must be well satisfied to initiate the next stage of need fulfilment and so on. This continues up to the apex of the hierarchy of needs in the pyramid. This hierarchy of needs is further elaborated under the sub-headings below:

#### **2.2.1.1 Physiological needs**

Physiological needs such as those for water (thirst) and food (hunger) are the most critical of all human needs. For example, according to Maslow (1943:373), a person who is hungry or lacks food may have a strong desire to satisfy this need before seeking to fulfil any other need. Basically, if the physiological needs are not gratified to the fullest, then other needs are less important and may be pushed to the background. Maslow (1943:374) affirms this when he explains that if a man is seriously hungry, nothing else comes to mind except food. In other words, all his thinking, behaviours and wishes are centred on food and nothing else. His ultimate goal is to find food to fill the stomach and without it, no other needs such as love, respect for oneself and others matter. It is only when this chronic need to satisfy his hunger is met that a new need may arise at the next level and so forth. This gives evidence of an organised basic human need which is called the “hierarchy of relative prepotency” (Maslow, 1943:375).

#### **2.2.1.2 Safety needs**

Safety needs may include protection from danger, the drive to live in a safe environment, and having law and order and stability (McLeod, 2007:4). According to Maslow (1943:376), safety needs can be best presented when we observe infants and children who react to danger by crying or shouting. They do so because they could be afraid of noises that are loud, a strong flash of light, being handled in a manner that is rough, or by losing the grip of a parent’s arm; these make them feel insecure. Also, if a child falls sick as a result of food poisoning or any other element which may result in continuous vomiting, severe headaches or stomach pains, this may cause the child

great fear. In such a situation, Maslow (1943:377) posits that children desire protection from the parents and should be given the assurance that nothing bad will happen to him/her.

Maslow's principle can also be related to adults. They require a secure environment or shelter to stay safe from criminal activities such as theft and abuse. Also, they need to stay safe from unhealthy environmental factors which may include heavy downpour of rains, hailstorms and strong winds. In such a situation, the most important need is a secure home to live in, which can provide protection from danger (Taormina & Gao, 2013:157). It is, therefore, the desire of humans (adults) to satisfy this need of providing a well-secured environment and home. Without this need being fulfilled, nothing else matters. It must be satisfied before they begin to seek the fulfilment of another, higher need (Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017:164).

### **2.2.1.3 Love needs**

On touching and affection, Maslow (1943:308-381) has the following to say:

“If both the physiological and safety needs are fairly well gratified, then, there will emerge the love and affection and belongingness needs, and the whole cycle already described will repeat itself with this new center.”

The extract above suggests that some needs are more important than others and that is why humans, adults in particular, seek to achieve the need that is felt most immediately before seeking to fulfil other, less pressing needs. Maslow's theory helps us to understand that once adults have satisfied their most immediate needs, they will go on to fulfil needs in the next stage. They begin to seek affection for themselves and to show love for others, like families, groups and wider communities. Again, as they continue to find love, they will want to be surrounded by their friends, loved ones, their husbands, wives and children. This helps us to understand that the love that is shown

should be reciprocal and shows that as they give affection to others, they also expect to be shown love.

#### **2.2.1.4 Esteem needs**

According to the theory, every individual at a certain point in life requires that he/she is valued in society. People desire to be viewed as respectable persons, particularly in their immediate community. This perhaps is the main point of Maslow's *Esteem Needs*. People have the desire to rate themselves highly and to win the respect of others. Self-esteem is derived from the individual's capacity and achievement, as well as the respect commanded from others. People feel fully satisfied when their need for self-esteem is fulfilled. They may develop self-confidence, a feeling of worth, strength, capability and usefulness as important members of the society. When the individual fulfils the need for self-esteem maximally, he/she will seek to fulfil a next need, which, according to Henwood, Derejko, Couture and Padgett (2015:222), is the highest need in the hierarchy, i.e. self-actualisation.

#### **2.2.1.5 Self-actualisation needs**

Citing Maslow, McLeod (2007:5) explains that self-actualization refers to the person's desire for self-fulfilment, which include the tendency for him/her to become actualized in what he is potentially able to become. In other words, a self-actualised person is one who has gained satisfaction or fulfilment from what he/she likes doing or is supposed to be doing as a result of his/her potential or capabilities. The activities that one loves doing because of their potential may vary from one person to another. For example, a painter must produce artistic arts; a musician makes music; an athlete must be involved in the activities of an athlete; and the ideal mother gives her best in child rearing. Maslow summed these up by saying that "*what a man can be, he must be*" (Maslow, 1943:382). In cases where the individual fails to achieve self-fulfilment or self-actualisation, Maslow contends he/she becomes discontented and restless.

Every person has the ability and the innate desire to climb the pyramid to the point of *self-actualisation*. However, some have failed to meet the lower levels of the needs hierarchy due to factors such as divorce and job loss (McLeod, 2007:2). For those who attain self-actualisation, 15 of their characteristics and/or attributes have been isolated. According to McLeod (2007:5-6) these include the following:

- 1) They perceive reality efficiently and can tolerate uncertainty;
- 2) Accept themselves and others for what they are;
- 3) Spontaneous in thought and action;
- 4) Problem-centered and not self-centered;
- 5) Unusual sense of humour;
- 6) Able to look at life objectively;
- 7) Highly creative;
- 8) Resistant to enculturation, but not purposely unconventional;
- 9) Concern for the welfare of humanity;
- 10) Capable of deep appreciation;
- 11) Establish deep satisfying interpersonal relationships with a few people;
- 12) Peak experiences;
- 13) Need for privacy;
- 14) Democratic attitudes; and
- 15) Strong moral/ethical standards.

#### **2.2.1.6 Implications of Maslow's theory of motivation for the study**

One of the worst things to endure in life is to live in perpetual poverty and this is (and has been) the case for many rural women. In such a situation, as Maslow explains in his theory, the ultimate need that rural women wish to have fulfilled concerns the basic human needs such as food, good drinking water, clothing and shelter. Without the fulfilment of these basic needs, the individual becomes frustrated and cannot consider anything else. The theory, therefore, places a heavy responsibility on all stakeholders of adult education to satisfy the socio-economic needs of rural women. They require skills

training in addition to basic education to help them deal with the problems of unemployment, marginalisation, discrimination and poverty. Adult educators have the responsibility to use appropriate teaching methods to equip rural women with the knowledge and skills they need to free themselves from socio-economic problems.

The ultimate need of women, particularly in this area of study, is skills training for poverty reduction. The women desire to acquire skills such as plumbing, fashion design, catering, ceramics, carpentry and computer training. Adult educators have a responsibility to train them in these skills in order for them to engage in livelihood activities. It is important that the adult education institutions and their educators be better equipped with educational resources to satisfy the needs of these rural folks. Their socio-economic lives need to be improved so that they can take care of themselves and their families.

According to Thokozani and Maseko (2017:2), because of the dynamism of needs it can be described as strong or weak. Counting on this idea, human needs can be different from time to time and from one place to another. Hence, currently rural women in the study area (Mthatha district) desire skills training that can enable them to be better placed for job opportunities and to be self-employed. It is important that the providers of adult education conduct needs analyses in order to provide them with appropriate educational programmes. When the women receive the correct training they will be able to engage in livelihood activities and this will help them to feel fulfilled, satisfied and worthy of being part of their respective communities and the country at large. The fact that many rural women in the study are unemployed, lack skills and are marginalised means that Maslow's theory is of value in their lives and that they grow in their self-esteem. Maslow (1943) refers to this as self-actualised needs. When this need is fulfilled, rural women can gain respect and value in their respective communities. The fulfilment of this need will also enable them to seek out the fulfilment of other needs in their pursuit of social and economic advancement.

### 2.2.2 Critical pedagogy

Critical theory existed before the inception of the theory of critical pedagogy. The concept of critical thinking started being discussed among Greek philosophers, renaissance scholars and intellectuals of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Abraham, 2014:2). Critical pedagogy, therefore, has its roots in the works of critical thinkers or theorists, e.g. the works of Hegel, Kant's critical philosophy introduced in the 1881 book *Critique of Pure Reason*, and Paulo Freire's work in the 1960s.

Paulo Freire's work extended critical pedagogy as far as the contemporary world. In defining critical pedagogy, Abraham (2014:1) explains that it is a way of encouraging people to think critically about their life's circumstances and promote practices that can bring about change in their social and economic lives. Freire (2018:48-66) elaborates that critical pedagogy is a way of reflecting about pressing issues and transforming them practically in life. In this study, the researcher defines critical pedagogy as the way rural women are able to think and critically examine the difficulties that they are experiencing and suggest ways by which they can be solved to transform their lives.

These ideas of critical pedagogy are the result of Paulo Freire's development and extension of the theory into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. McKernan (2013:425) affirms this in saying:

“...critical pedagogy is a movement involving relationships of teaching and learning so that students gain a critical self-consciousness and social awareness and take appropriate action against oppressive forces. This idea is central to Freire's notion of ‘conscientization’ or the coming to personal critical consciousness.”

As may be seen, Paulo Freire was thus instrumental in the development of the theory in the 1960s and, according to Kincheloe (2007:12), the result of his work on poverty-stricken north-eastern Brazil in the 1960s brought together liberation theological ethics

and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School in Germany with the aim to liberate the oppressed through the provision of education.

The main aim of Freire's theory is to empower people, especially the disadvantaged or the oppressed, to think and reason critically about ways in which to transform their individual lives through education. Citing Kincheloe (2005), Aliakbari and Faraji (2011:77) affirm that the theory concerns itself with transforming learners and empowering them with skills and knowledge that can free them from oppression and enslavement. In this study, the ultimate goal of critical pedagogy is to correct the educational inadequacies of the oppressed people, rural women in particular, and to liberate them from the unjust reality in which they find themselves (Quan-Baffour, 2012:92). Furthermore, it also raises awareness of discrimination against members of the marginalised in society and thus the providers of adult education for the marginalised and the oppressed should be unbiased because education is a tool for liberation which must be used to transform the deplorable state of people's lives. Therefore, Freire advocates for a critical reflection and action with regard to the provision of education for the oppressed in order to transform their circumstances. According to Abraham (2014:1), critical pedagogy as an approach to adult education should be transformative. The underlying principle of the theory of critical pedagogy is to use education as a process and a practice which can ensure freedom from socio-economic and political oppression (Quan-Baffour, 2012:92).

Despite Paulo Freire's visions and achievements of critical pedagogy for the poor and the world in general, his theory has been met with criticism. For example, citing McArthur (2010), Abraham (2014:8) mentions three distinct factors: 1) it has mainly been criticised for focusing on the macro-level education system as opposed to engaging in micro-level teaching taking place in the classroom situation; 2) it has been criticised for its failure to create a pathway for transformation; and 3) for it being more theoretical than practical. Nevertheless, the theory has some great implications for adult education in that it postulates that education can bring positive change to the social, economic and political lives of the oppressed in society. These might include the



unskilled labourer, the unemployed, the dispossessed, the marginalised, the poor and the vulnerable. It enables them to rethink and examine their situations and immediately suggests practical solutions with which to transform their lives. Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) argue that critical pedagogy can assist people to seek immediate practical steps to change their lives through education. Education and adult education in particular, should liberate the poor from ignorance, poverty and helplessness.

### **2.2.2.1 Implications of critical pedagogy theory for the study**

The theory discussed above has implications for this study. Considering the fact that millions of poor people require basic knowledge and a skill to improve their socio-economic conditions, the theory manifests its value through the education of these people. As expressed in Paulo Freire's book – *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* - education should liberate the poor and correct the inadequacies of the past (Kincheloe, 2007). The South African apartheid era caused a vast gap between the rich and the poor because millions of people were denied basic education. Rule (2006:117-118) affirms that post-apartheid South Africa has seen unprecedented numbers of unemployed and marginalised people due to a lack of basic education. Mayer et al. (2011:7-11) also posit that there are millions of South Africans who are unemployed and living in poverty. This persistent problem is the result of denying indigenous citizens the right to basic education.

These socio-economic problems call for a critical reflection on the lives of rural women, through the provision of ACET (DHET, 2013a:1). The education provided and received should seek to bring about equality, social justice and bring changes to the lives of the oppressed. Critical pedagogy is relevant in this case as it seeks to cause the rural oppressed to reflect on their lives through engaging in activities that will enable them to assess their situation and circumstances. In so doing, they will be able to suggest ways to change or improve on their present situation. It is, therefore, important that rural women are equipped with basic knowledge and skills for socio-economic development and for poverty reduction.

Many rural women are illiterate, unemployed, marginalized, poor, and lack relevant skills for employment (Mayer et al., 2011:7). These conditions call for a critical reflection on the education and training they receive. To change this situation effectively, education becomes an important tool for their socio-economic development and it is here that critical pedagogy holds value for the providers of basic education, skills training and ACET in particular. They should conduct needs analyses and reflect critically on the deplorable state of the lives of these rural women. This will enable them to provide educational programmes that the women really need for their survival. Rural women require becoming equipped with basic knowledge and skills for them to have work opportunities and for them to engage in livelihood activities to care for themselves and their families. In so doing they will ultimately be able to contribute to nation building.

### **2.2.3 Empowerment theory**

An important school of thought underpinning this study is found in the theory of empowerment. Empowerment has been defined by various researchers and has become somewhat of a 'Buzzword' (Woodall, Warwick-Booth & Cross, 2012:742-745) in describing modern-day phenomena. According to Chattopadhyay (2005:1), empowerment can be explained from multiple perspectives which involve choices and actions in all aspects of life, e.g. social, economic, and political. It also involves the ability to control resources as well as decisions made. The World Bank defines empowerment as "the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes" (Chattopadhyay, 2005:27). In other words, the empowerment process should involve genuine and active participation of the affected groups of people in development initiatives meant to improve their livelihoods. Furthermore, Mosedale (2005:243) argues that the empowerment of people should take the form of individual, family or community initiatives. This cannot be achieved without providing the right conditions for empowerment to take place. The researcher defines empowerment as a means of equipping or providing individuals (rural women especially) with basic knowledge and skills to engage in livelihood activities to transform their lives socio-economically.

These definitions make it clear that there is great need for a deeper understanding of empowerment theory. In an attempt to better explain the concept, Lord and Hutchison (2009:2) in a study conducted on the process of empowerment compared it to 'power and powerlessness'. Power is defined as the "capacity of some persons and organisations to produce intended, foreseen and unforeseen effects on others" (Wrong, 2017:x). This means that individuals or organisations have the ability to affect others positively or negatively. By providing the correct interventions, through ACET for example, rural women can be empowered to live better lives. In the study, the authors highlight the numerous sources of power, including personality, wealth and influential organisations (Galbraith, 1983, cited by Lord & Hutchison, 2009:2). These variables can have a positive effect on people by way of empowering them with relevant programmes and skills to change their living conditions. Powerlessness, on the other hand, is associated with a person's expectation with regard to his/her actions to negatively influence the outcome of life events. In other words, citing Albee (1981), Lord and Hutchison (2009:2) elucidate that powerlessness is associated with people who lack socio-political and economic willpower to control resources to benefit their lives.

Many rural women rely on the government for their every need because they lack skills, are unemployed and live in poverty. This makes them feel powerless and that their situation cannot be improved. This situation of powerlessness that rural women find themselves in is clearly explained when looking at the case of persons with disabilities. Citing Asch (1986), Lord and Hutchison (2009:3) mention that people with disabilities,

"...have so internalized the generally negative attitudes towards them because of their disabilities that they cannot believe that collective action can improve their lives. They have seen the problems as inherent in their medical conditions and have not been urged to join others to demand structured changes that would render the environment useful for them."

Empowerment, therefore, becomes a means to control oneself or to have a sense of personal control. It enables people to better understand their circumstances and needs.

The aim is for individuals to own their lives and make decisive changes. Cornwall (2016:342-344) affirms that the aim of empowerment is to augment people's possibilities to take control of their individual lives. In any event, as people gain control of their lives through empowerment programmes, this should bring them their desired life changes. This notion is supported by Cornwall (2016:342-344) that empowerment is a systemic process of engagement in activities to transform people's social and personal experiences and to enable them to take action to effect a complete change in their lives. Indeed, rural women are required to change their mind-set away from their predicaments such as poverty, unemployment and societal discrimination to mention a few. Hence, engage in empowerment programmes such as those offering basic education and skills training like ACET.

### **2.2.3.1 Types of empowerment**

The various definitions of empowerment, in summary, are central to the development progress of people (women in particular) in all aspects of their lives. These could be social, educational, economic and political. It is against the backdrop of this concept of developmental progression that the researcher sought to engage in further discussion of some of the types of empowerment, with particular reference to women.

#### **2.2.3.1.1 Social empowerment**

In the contemporary world, no man is an island. In other words, humans cannot live in isolation. Living and helping each other in societies assists individuals to realise their full potential in life. Empowering people (especially women) socially is, therefore, necessary for development. Citing Antony (2006:27), Mandal (2013:19) explains that social empowerment is a developmental process in which individuals are able to realise their full personality and roles in all facets of their life. Thus, social empowerment means enjoying equal rights, equal status and freedom of self-development. Citing sociologist Gangrade (2001), Mandal (2013:19-20) is of the view that women's social empowerment implies equal status and opportunities and being at liberty to develop

oneself. In this way the women are able to contribute to the development of the communities to which they belong and take part in innovative activities. The involvement of women in productive activities can contribute greatly to improve their status quo, boost their family well-being and the community at large (Jamali, 2009:232; Scott, Dolan, Johnstone-Louis, Sugden & Wu, 2012:543-568).

Lacking social empowerment denies many women access to education (Subramaniam, 2011:72-95). Nevertheless, many women have taken an alternative route through social entrepreneurship and using available resources to their advantage in a more meaningful way (Sud, VanSandt & Baugous, 2009:203). Branzei (2012:21-47) rightly argues that social entrepreneurship offers a more fitting alternative to entrepreneurial activity and programmes that can bring about social change. A very important aspect of social empowerment is that it offers solutions to a variety of social problems (e.g. marginalisation, low self-esteem and so forth). It is also accepted to be an effective instrument for generating economic, social and environmental significance (Murphy & Coombes, 2009:325-336; Acs, Boardman & McNeely, 2013:785-796). Considering the value of social empowerment in the lives of people it should be enhanced and promoted to improve their living conditions.

#### **2.2.3.1.2 Educational empowerment**

Education has long been seen as a vehicle for social change and development. Through it an individual is able to develop his/her intellectual ability, welfare and potential for empowerment. However, despite much being done to educate women at higher levels of education, they are still not able to compete with men in the labour market. Kaur and Singh (2017:20) confirm that women are making significant advances in the economy through education, but when compared to their male counterparts they are deficient in their access to finance, training and rights. Beaman, Keleher and Magruder (2018:1) reinforce that although the gender gap has closed up over the years, women are still being marginalised in their earnings as compared to men all across the world. This economic difficulty indicates that the empowerment of women through

education is very important for their development. It is through education that women can be empowered to gain knowledge, skills and self-confidence for their developmental progress.

Women, particularly rural dwellers, can be empowered educationally by giving them opportunities and access to education. Through education, rural women can be better prepared for life's challenges. Educated women tend to show better participation when it comes to taking decisions about their lives, families, and, most importantly, about gender issues. However, women's empowerment with respect to gender issues has been sorely neglected. According to Stromquist (2015:314), for instance, approximately 11.7 million women in the United States enrolled in tertiary education in 2014. However, out of this number only 900 of these women enrolled in gender studies programmes, revealing the importance of rural women being educated and well-informed about gender issues in the empowerment process.

In South Africa, cases of sexual harassment and violence are frequently reported and many women have been left behind in economic progress, societal recognition, and access to education (Stromquist, 2015:314). By empowering them through educational opportunities and access, they can be equipped with skills to improve their socio-economic lives. Education is necessary to ensure equality in all facets of women's social lives, irrespective of gender. It is important, therefore, that women, especially rural dwellers, are educated and equipped with skills so that they are able to withstand the inevitable imbalances they face in life. It is only when women are given these opportunities that educational empowerment can be achieved and realised.

#### **2.2.3.1.3 Economic empowerment**

Empowerment is crucial when considering a society's employment needs. Women need salaried employment in order to attain economic advancement. Elliott (2008:86) affirms that "wage employment means economic power." Being employed means that women earn an income which enables them to provide for their families and have an active

share in their households with a feeling of economic self-reliance. For this economic progress to be realised in the lives of rural women, education is vital. Through education, rural women are equipped with the necessary livelihood skills to engage in economic activities for better living conditions. Due to some obsolete cultural practices and responsibilities, however, many of these women have been denied an education. This has not only affected their economic progress and endangered them, but also their families and the rest of society. It is important, therefore, that education is used as a tool to enable them to access academic and economic opportunities, thereby achieving economic empowerment.

Through empowerment programmes such as those in basic education, skills training and ACET in particular, rural women can acquire basic knowledge in economic activities to improve their economic lives. These may include having access to sustainable employment, being self-employed and engaging in livelihood activities. Through the provision of appropriate programmes of study they can attain economic empowerment for poverty reduction. Biswas (2010:27) contends that economic empowerment is a potent tool for poverty reduction. For this to materialise, however, rural women must be given access to equitable education, which should culminate in them gaining access to property rights, bank loans, employment and/or self-employment, and protection against violence (Duflo, 2012:1070). Economic advancement through education has helped many women to use technology to reduce their domestic workload. According to Stromquist (2015:310), industrialisation in the form of infrastructure (e.g. electricity, good drinking water, and home appliances) has helped women considerably in reducing their domestic workload. The economic empowerment of rural women through the use of technology not only benefits them, but society as well. It gives all members in their respective communities' opportunities to have an active share in the economy (Duflo, 2012:1015-1079).

However, women's economic empowerment is faced with challenges concerning gender imbalances, reduced access to property ownership and lower rates of employment (Bornman, Budlender, Clarke, Manoek, van der Westhuizen, Watson &

lqba, 2012:8). The reason is that the economic empowerment of women has been neglected in the drafting of the country's major government policies. The government, in its 2012 State of the Nation Address (SONA), revealed that no plans had been made to introduce programmes for women's economic empowerment. Bornman et al. (2012:7) had the following to say:

“In the light of this (women's economic empowerment), one cannot discern any significant commitment from SONA (State of the Nation Address) which may contribute toward the reduction of female unemployment in the year ahead.”

However, this concern specified above has been addressed over the years. For example, the State of the Nation Address (SONA) in 2019 by the Minister in the Presidency responsible for women affairs, Bathabile Dlamini (MP) indicated mechanisms used to combat women empowerment and equality issues. Dlamini (2019:7) said thus:

“We have developed a framework on gender-responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and auditing. This will ensure that quality indicators and targets are included in all government plans to show what each department will do for women empowerment and gender equality.”

Indeed, without government commitment to the cause of women's economic empowerment, untold damage can be done to the family, community and the nation as a whole. It is thus important that women are empowered economically by providing them with basic knowledge and skills training. The saying “if you educate a male child you educate an individual, but if you educate a girl child you educate a nation” (Mandal, 2013:20) indicates that equipping rural women with livelihood skills enables them to engage in economic activities to improve not only themselves, but the nation as a whole. Bird (2018:12-13) affirms that economic empowerment brings about social justice, corrects gender imbalances, and improves the equality, wealth and well-being of nations; it provides women with self-confidence and decision-making power within the



household. It also allows for relative freedom of movement and influence in community matters, and above all reduces poverty.

#### **2.2.3.1.4 Political empowerment**

Citing Brill (2000), Mandal (2013:22) posits that in the arena of political empowerment, women's voices are to be heard in decision making, public policy, and political debate. Women should be able to air their views and share their wealth of knowledge at home and in the workplace. However, there has been a widespread imbalance of their involvement in political matters when compared to men (Duflo, 2012:1015-1079; Chioda & Verdú, 2016). This is because women, especially rural women, are marginalised and poor, lacking in financial means, self-confidence, education and leadership skills, and most importantly are burdened with domestic work. Most rural women perform more domestic work than their male counterparts. This imbalance has always existed and continues to grow. Kelly and Bhabha (2014:731-752) reveal that rural adolescent girls of ages between 14 and 17 are engaged in more household tasks than boys. This gender disparity burdens women with domestic responsibilities and leaves little room for engaging in political activities. It is, therefore, important to enact policies that are specific to interventions packages which can help women have a political say and footing in society (Bird, 2018:10).

Consequently it is important that rural women are empowered through granting them access to politically oriented knowledge in order for them to become self-independent. This political knowledge will enable them to assume leadership roles to free themselves from male domination, oppression, discrimination, marginalisation and all the forms of maltreatment they encounter both within and outside the family, community, nation and world at large. If rural women are never given a political voice they will continue to lag behind in assuming leadership roles and in the decision-making skills required for their advancement. Mandal (2013:22) contends that rural women's empowerment, especially in the political sphere, is crucial for their advancement and to ensure gender equality in society. By giving women the opportunity to be involved in political decision making

means that they will have the necessary platform to place the interests of women in the foreground. Stromquist (2015:313) points out that inequality among women are viewed as an international human rights issue which should be placed at the top of the governmental priority list.

#### **2.2.3.2 Implications of empowerment theory for the study**

Empowerment theory has implications for the present study in that it places emphasis on equipping rural women with knowledge and skills to advance the socio-economic development of their own lives, as well as that of the wider community and indeed the country as a whole. Citing Page and Czuba (1999), Kamando (2014:39) explicates that the theory is multidimensional and entails a social process that seeks to help disadvantaged people to develop the power they need to take control of their lives. Many rural women in the present study are utterly powerless in that they lack basic education and skills whilst being faced with social and economic problems. Educational empowering has the potential to cause them to rethink their situation and transform their lives. Gilchrist (2009:71) affirms that empowerment enables people to gain knowledge and skills, and use their competencies to improve their socio-economic lives. This renders the empowerment theory essential for the study. The socio-economic problems of rural women can be resolved when they have acquired 'power' through attaining knowledge and skills training for poverty reduction. In addition, there is a need for women to be actively involved in their own training. They can do so by suggesting ways in which their lives can be enhanced and by suggesting programmes that will be of benefit to them. According to O'Faircheallaigh (2010:19), empowerment should involve genuine and active participation of the affected groups of people in development initiatives aimed at providing them with sustainable livelihoods. Therefore it is necessary for rural women to be involved in their own developmental process. If women are empowered through education, they are given a voice on various issues concerning their lives.

### **2.2.3.3 Aligning Maslow's theory of motivation, critical pedagogy and empowerment theory**

Maslow's theory of motivation highlighted the importance of human needs as indicated on a pyramid (see Fig 2.1). For example, food, good drinking water, clothing and shelter are important human needs that need to be satisfied before going in search of another. In this study, rural women require skills training in addition to basic education to solve problems such as unemployment, discrimination and poverty. When these needs are gratified then they can seek for another. Based on the foregoing the theory of critical pedagogy is relevant in that it gives insight into the problems of rural women. Critical pedagogy emphasised the need for a critical reflection into the lives of rural women (adult learners), the teaching practices of adult educators, the providers of adult education programmes and adult education practices in general. Based on the principles of critical pedagogy adult educators must apply new teaching methods that evolved in their teaching practices for the benefit of their learners. Moreover, learners must embrace educational provisions that aim to empower them to bring about the desired lives changes. The empowerment theory connects well with critical pedagogy. It challenges individuals to assess their living conditions and make informed choices and use available resources to transform their lives. Rural women desired to be empowered with knowledge and skills for an engagement in livelihood activities to transform their lives socio-economically. Thus, there is a need for them to embrace educational provisions like ACET to achieve their goals. This makes the empowerment theory the most relevant in the lives of rural women and subsequently for the study. The theory is most emphasised in this study because it cuts across all aspect of the developmental goals of rural women such as educational, political, social and economic.

### **2.2.3.4 Women empowerment in South Africa**

The empowerment of women in South Africa is a matter of national concern. It is for this reason that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has established an Adult Education division aimed at equipping rural women with the necessary

knowledge and skills to fight pressing social challenges. Moyo and Francis (2010:44) point out that the government of South Africa is actively involved in the empowerment of rural women. For example, ACET (Baatjes & Chaka, 2012:3-4; DHET, 2013a:1) has been developed as an empowerment programme to cater for the country's educationally disadvantaged. The deplorable conditions in which people live, particularly rural women, are a consequence of the wrongs of apartheid.

The literature reveals that leaders who have been shown to be progressive are those who have realised the importance of education in tackling issues such as gender disparities, poverty and unemployment. Griggs et al. (2013:307) affirm that the empowerment of women through education is an effective way of reducing poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development. Therefore, the provision of ACET is critical for the development of the rural women who are the focus of this study. If rural women are to succeed in their socio-economic lives, they should be given opportunities and access to education. This view is supported by Blustein (2011:12) who asserts that the lack of access to educational and occupational resources has affected the employment prospects of many rural women. The researcher is of the view that when women are empowered and educated, this can bring about the change they need to advance their socio-economic and political status.

Skills' training is another important tool through which rural women can be empowered to deal with the challenging circumstances of their socio-economic lives. With the relevant skills, women can become self-employed or can start to engage in livelihood activities. Quan-Baffour (2015:26) affirms that the empowerment of rural women through the development of skills can help solve the problem of unemployment. The researcher trusts that women's empowerment can be seen as an emancipatory process which seeks to equip rural women with the relevant knowledge and skills for poverty reduction and better job opportunities.

It is an unfortunate fact that in the past rural women's development has been neglected and indeed been criticised. Researchers, for example, Bird (2018:15) criticises the fact

that many poor women have been denied education and opportunities to essential goods and services which consequently makes them vulnerable to poverty. To effectively correct this perception, it is important that rural women are given equal chances and access to education and skills training programmes to improve their socio-economic lives. Affirming this view, Sonja (2011:67) expresses a desire for rural women to have access to empowerment programmes such as basic education and skills training. By allowing rural women access to such empowerment programmes, the researcher opines that women will be assisted in the process of owning their lives and will reduce their vulnerability as members of the community to which they belong.

Many governments in the world have supported the idea of giving women opportunities and access to basic education and empowerment programmes. The South African government has taken the idea very seriously, especially for those living in the rural areas, and has joined with other governments in becoming a signatory to international initiative programmes aimed at empowering and protecting the rights of women. This is affirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action: Strategic objective A.1.58 (q), which stipulates that, all governments:

“take particular measures to promote and strengthen policies and programmes for indigenous women with their full participation and for their cultural diversity, so that they have opportunities and the possibility of choice in the development process in order to eradicate poverty that affects them.”

Responding to the call to empower women, the South African government established programmes to develop its citizens socially and economically for poverty reduction. One of such initiatives is the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979. For instance, Article 2(e) of CEDAW is aimed at protecting all women in South Africa against all forms of discrimination by any person, organisation or enterprise. Furthermore, Article 3 is aimed at advancing the plight of women in political, socio-economic and cultural issues. This initiative is significant as it

has enabled women to enjoy human rights, social justice and the freedom of having equality in their respective communities.

Post-apartheid South Africa is indeed devoted to promoting and ensuring the empowerment of its citizens. This has been done through the provision of a number of programmes catering for the country's disadvantaged individuals, especially those from rural backgrounds. These programmes or initiatives may include but are not limited to the following:

- ❖ **Social grants:** The Department of Social Development in South African provides grants to the poor (men, women and children), especially those living in rural communities, to improve their standard of living. However, the provision of grants is insufficient and vast numbers of people live on the edge of survival. To advance the economic development of rural dwellers, there is a need for them to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to live productive lives.
- ❖ **Universal access to primary health care:** The National Health Department in South Africa is responsible for primary health care. The aim of this department is to ensure that all have equal access to equitable health care regardless of financial disparities. Rural communities are at greater risk in that the health care infrastructure in the rural areas is inadequate and the connection of roads is poor. This makes it difficult for rural dwellers to benefit fully from this initiative. It is important to note that a healthy population of individuals lives longer and that this contributes to extended productivity and economic well-being. For this reason, rural women should be given easy access to health facilities for sustainable development.
- ❖ **Affirmative action:** This is a policy stipulated in The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998). This policy seeks to address inequality at the workplace. Disadvantaged individuals, particularly rural women, should be given equal opportunities and access to employment. This has failed to some extent

because most women lack the basic education and skills needed for them to be better placed for work-related activities. It thus becomes necessary for rural women to develop in knowledge and skills to address their inability to be employed.

- ❖ **The Flagship Programme:** This programme is controlled by Department of Water and Forestry (2007) which aims to develop rural women with family responsibilities in food production so that they can survive economically in their respective communities. Rural women should be in an environment that is suitable for them to engage in economic activities for livelihood.
- ❖ **The Financial and Fiscal Commission:** This commission is responsible for making recommendations to government on financial matters. The government is advised by this commission to be fair and impartial when it comes to dispensing money. This can ensure that rural women are supported financially for their social, educational and economic needs and development.
- ❖ **The Public Service Commission:** This commission was established to ensure a productive and efficient public service. The commission is responsible to investigate, monitor and report on matters of public administration and employment practices in the workplace.
- ❖ **The Victim Empowerment Programme:** This programme seeks to empower vulnerable members in society such as the elderly, children and rural women in particular. It seeks to bring social justice to victims of crime and domestic violence.
- ❖ **Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET):** This programme is designed to cater for both youths and adults, particularly rural women who never had the opportunity to go to school. It helps to provide basic knowledge and skills

to these educationally disadvantaged individuals. Rural women are the most severely affected of these groupings.

- ❖ **Black Economic Empowerment (BEE):** This programme was established by government to address the economic inequalities of the past. In this sense, then, it aims to offer people, especially black South African citizens, opportunities and access to economic rights and activities. In this way those who have been affected are able to transform their lives and engage actively in the country's economy.

#### **2.2.3.5 The use of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) to empower rural women**

The effective use of indigenous knowledge systems has an important role to play in empowering rural women for socio-economic development. According to Emeagwali (2014:1), indigenous knowledge can be defined as the cumulative body of strategies, practices, techniques, tools, intellectual resources, explanations, beliefs and values accumulated over time in a particular locality. This definition gives insight into the use of indigenous resources and knowledge to empower disadvantaged individuals, especially those in rural areas with productive skills. The case of Mozambique as described vividly by Gerdes (2011) is worth considering. The women of Mozambique used indigenous knowledge systems to elevate their socio-economic lives through Arts such as weaving and basketry. For example, in the Inhambane Province where the (Gi) Tonga language is spoken widely among the natives, the women produced beautiful handbags. The handbag is called *gipatsi* (singular) and *sipatsi* (plural) (Gerdes, 2011:9). Economically, the lives of the women improved as their products attracted both national and international buyers which provided financial income for them.



**Figure 2.2 and 2.3 below** show examples of a *gipatsi* (handbag) in different designs and colour.



Fig 2.2

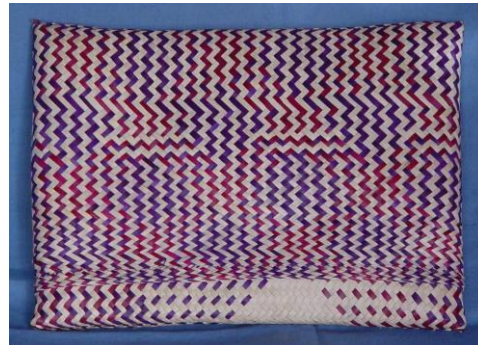


Fig 2.3

**Source:** (Gerdes, 2011:10-11)

Indeed, the indigenous knowledge system is the foundation for development in rural areas as seen in the case of women in Mozambique. It is, therefore, vital that rural women use their creativity and resources available to them for sustainable economic growth and development.

Africa's rural sectors contribute 50% of economic activities in indigenous trade (Emeagwali, 2014:3) such as bead making, soap making, textiles, weaving and alcohol brewing. Despite the developments in indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), many rural women, particularly in South Africa continue to live in poverty. This might be due to a lack of knowledge and skills in IKS or paucity in the transfer of knowledge and skills to others for sustainable community development. The researcher argues that for South African rural women to develop socio-economically they must take advantage of indigenous trade through non-formal education to improve their living conditions. On the contrary, many rural women have sought to semi-urban/urban migration to satisfy their economic needs (Camlin, Snow & Hosegood, 2014:529). The urban areas, however, are lacking in the use of IKS due to an increase in development and the acceptance of technological advancement (Hari, 2020:100). Given the growing currency in technology, there is a need to draw awareness of the use of IKS in both rural and urban areas

considering its value for sustainable economic development, especially for women in rural areas.

## **2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review is an important aspect of this study. The researcher reviews literature, which helped him to identify to the stated research questions (Vom, Simons, Niehaves, Riemer, Plattfaut & Cleven, 2009:2210) in accordance with the aims of the study specified in section 1.4.1. To achieve this goal it is very important to understand the context of existing literature in the field. Vom et al. (2009:2209) affirm that the literature review demonstrates an author's level of knowledge in a particular field of study which may include vocabulary, theories, key variables and phenomena, and it also informs the researcher to avoid what is already known. The literature review helped the researcher to select and apply research methods and techniques that are appropriate for the study. Gary, Mills and Airasian (2006:29) affirm that the aim of the literature review is to uncover research approaches and specific techniques used for data collection processes that have been productive or unproductive in the investigation of the research topic. This information helped the researcher to learn from other researchers' mistakes and to use their experiences to his advantage.

The researcher sought to review the relevant literature in accordance with the following headings:

- ❖ Apartheid policy and rural women's lack of basic education and skills;
- ❖ Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) and community development;
- ❖ Poverty alleviation among rural women.

### **2.3.1 Apartheid policy and rural women's lack of basic education and skills**

A landmark is something that can never be forgotten, meaning that the events of the past might never be erased from people's minds. This is typical of the historical South African education system in that it can never be forgotten that blacks were given poor education. The system of education that existed in the past impacted negatively on the lives of citizens in South Africa. Johnson and Quan-Baffour (2016:1) rightly put it that during the period of apartheid the South African education system and its educational policies left many families, particularly women, without basic education and skills for survival. As a result these people are unemployable, marginalised and live in poverty in the societies to which they belong. Indeed, this researcher of the present study has observed in the study area of Mthatha, South Africa, where many women still lack basic education and skills.

Apartheid rule in South Africa began in 1948, while the 'Bantu Education' system for black citizens started with the establishment of the 1953 Bantu Education Act (Moore, 2017:107). The Act's educational practices and policies contributed greatly to the low level of literacy in the country today. The form of education provided under apartheid rendered blacks hopeless in their quest for an equitable society. According to McKay (2007:287), the apartheid government aimed to disadvantage blacks educationally so that they could only be good for working in white-owned factories and farms. To achieve this aim the apartheid government formulated the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and implemented it to give black South Africans an education to suit their needs and keep them as a separate group of people from their whites counterparts (Agbaria, 2018:6). In other words, the Bantu education promoted low-quality education and separate schooling for Black South Africans, who would be trained only for subordination as emphasised in the words of the Minister of Native Affairs. He said thus;

"When I have control of native education, I will reform it so that the natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them . . .

People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for natives” (Troup (1976, cited by McKay, 2007:287).

Equal opportunities to education become the only means for socio-economic development, which is why people of all ethnicities should be given access to the same level of education. Unfortunately, many native South Africans were denied basic education and instead were given the type of education to benefit whites. Citing Dlamini (1990:72), Tawiah and Quan-Baffour (2017:71) affirm that the blacks were trained to be “hewers of wood and drawers of water” in their own native land. The education provided in the apartheid era was planned specially to teach the blacks to be obedient, loyal and to accept their labour and culture-associated roles. This is clearly seen in the words of the Minister of Native Affairs;

“There is no place for him [the black child] in the European [white South African] community above the level of certain forms of labour . . . Until now he has been subject to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze” (Troup, 1976, cited in McKay, 2007:287).

Black South Africans were discriminated against and segregated from their white counterparts. The education they received was to train them to become labourers in white factories and farmlands from which they were not allowed to eat. These hostile conditions in which black people find themselves necessitate that they are given access to quality education. The missionaries were the first to initiate mission schools to provide the kind of education that was needed by the native blacks. The aim was to provide a better education for the blacks. Frankema (2012:335) maintains that the gap in quality of education between white and black schools in the African colonies was corrected by missionary activities. Many Africans benefited from the education provided by the missionaries, which included the first generation of the elite class in South Africa who passed through the mission schools. Fourie, Ross and Viljoen (2014:3) confirm that the amaXhosa, the Batswana, the Basotho, the amaZulu and many other groups in the

Northern Province benefited from mission schools. The main form of education provided was in the form of literacy skills. Reading and writing were taught by the missionaries, their wives and adult children. The blacks benefited from both literacy and spiritual teachings (Frankema, 2012:335). However, this form of education was not enough to guarantee native blacks their socio-economic needs. Literacy and spiritual teachings ought to be in addition to skills training to enable the people engage in income generating and livelihood activities such as carpentry, brick laying, farming and fashion design.

The historical existence of adult education responded to the call for equal education for all. The missionaries and their wives taught the disadvantaged blacks how to read and write, but unfortunately could not cater for the majority of the black population. Therefore, several organisations and churches instituted night schools and literacy classes for natives in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Pietermaritzburg in the 1920s and 1930s to augment black people's education. Horrel (1968:19) confirms that in the year 1955, there were about 10 000 black students who attended night schools which aimed to teach literacy. These night schools and literacy classes did not last very long and were closed on account of the Bantu Education Act (Act No 47 of 1953) (Baatjes, 2019:31), which became responsible for registration and admission into night schools. In addition, government subsidies towards night schools were reduced and because of the lack of support for night schools, they were forced to close down (Baatjes, 2019:31). Indeed, the apartheid government's educational policies were enacted with the intention to stop night schools and eradicate literacy programmes so that the black South Africans would not receive education. This is evident in the country today, particularly in rural areas.

The high rate of a lack of skills and illiteracy after 1994 was as a result of having denied blacks the right to basic education. This problem might also be attributed to cultural practices and attitudes of black parents towards the education of female children. In most African families the girl child received training by the mother to become a good home maker and a wife rather than going to school. As a result, according to Aitchison

(2006:90) more than 26 million adults, including women (15 years and older) found themselves in a divided educational state (semi-literate and illiterate). Out of this significant number of 26 million, about 12 to 13 million had not completed Grade 9, 7.4 to 8.5 million had not completed Grade 7 (those adults in a semi-literate state) and about 2.9 to 4.2 million people had never attended school (those adults considered to be illiterates). Table 2.1 below gives information about the literacy and basic education levels of adult South Africans 15 years and over between 1995 and 2001.

**Table 2.1: Literacy and basic education levels of adult South Africans aged 15 and over between 1995 and 2001**

<b>Level of education</b>	<b>October 1995: Household Survey</b>	<b>1996: General Population Census</b>	<b>2001: General Population Census</b>
<b>Full general education (Gr 9 and more)</b>	14.3 million (54%)	13.1 million (50%)	15.8 million (52%)
<b>Less than full general education (less than Gr 9)</b>	12.2 million (46%)	13.2 million (50%)	14.6 million (48%)
<b>Less than Gr 7</b>	7.4 million (28%)	8.5 million (32%)	9.6 million (32%)
<b>No schooling</b>	2.9 million (11%)	4.2 million (16%)	4.7 million (16%)

**(Source: Aitchison, 2006:91)**

The figures above show an increase in the data year after year. This indicates that there are still millions of adults who require basic education and training (McKay, 2007:285-286). To remedy the challenging situation mentioned and indicated in the table above, various education departments started providing Adult Basic Education (ABE) to blacks. Labour unions joined in the struggle to liberate the people, especially blacks, in the form of addressing the lack of basic education and skills training. They realised that there were many native blacks who lack the basic knowledge and skills necessary for employment in order to improve their poor living conditions. According to Webb (2017:57), labour unions were established to empower farmworkers (native blacks) with self-employment skills and to make the labourers aware that they were not to be subjected to slavery through working for others.

Indeed, the literacy rate for adult citizens has improved over the years in South Africa due to efforts by government, unions and NGOs. Table 2.2 gives clear literacy rate in the country in 2016.

**Table 2.2: Adult (age 35–64) literacy rates by province, 2016**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>Not literate</b>	<b>Literate</b>	<b>Total</b>
Western Cape	Number	288 918	1 762 494	<b>2 051 412</b>
	Per cent	14,1	85,9	
Eastern Cape	Number	393 954	1 120 567	<b>1 514 521</b>
	Per cent	26,0	74,0	
Northern Cape	Number	94 552	244 282	<b>338 834</b>
	Per cent	27,9	72,1	
Free State	Number	192 933	609 029	<b>801 962</b>
	Per cent	24,1	75,9	
Kwazulu-Natal	Number	650 033	1 956 497	<b>2 606 530</b>
	Per cent	24,9	75,1	
North West	Number	299 994	760 068	<b>1 060 062</b>
	Per cent	28,3	71,7	
Gauteng	Number	575 371	4 013 463	<b>4 588 834</b>
	Per cent	12,5	87,5	
Mpumalanga	Number	312 273	784 347	<b>1 096 620</b>
	Per cent	28,5	71,5	
Limpopo	Number	372 090	922 171	<b>1 294 261</b>
	Per cent	28,7	71,3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>3 180 117</b>	<b>12 172 919</b>	<b>15 353 036</b>
	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>20,7</b>	<b>79,3</b>	<b>100,0</b>

(StatsSA: Community Survey 2016)

Despite the efforts made by the various groups to tackle the problem of illiteracy, a lack of basic education and skills, there were still some challenges. For instance, the

provision of Adult Basic Education and Training did not achieve its aim of providing the blacks with the needed skills to combat unemployment and poverty because of a lack of adequate funding and resources (Baatjes, 2008:206). As a result many black South Africans are unemployed and unskilled to such a degree that they cannot attain any form of employment. This study sought to contribute to existing literature by exploring the extent of a lack skill in the Mthatha area of South Africa and suggest solutions to these problems. As emphasised a lack of skills can lead to poverty and low levels of entrepreneurial activities. For this reason it is important to devise means to improve the literacy levels of the majority of the country's citizens. In an attempt to help rural women shoulder their responsibilities and enhance socio-economic transformation, Quan-Baffour (2012:91) contends that the provision of education for the poor is a tool for survival. Indeed, education, particularly adult education, is a survival mechanism and basic education, knowledge and skills training are necessary for individuals to gain meaningful employment to liberate them from poverty and socio-economic slavery.

### **2.3.2 ACET and community development**

Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) is a form of Adult education and is an important instrument for advancing the development of rural women and their communities in South Africa currently. According to Jinna and Maikano (2014:36), adult education like ACET is a process of transmitting technical and vocational skills to individuals which can be used to develop these people in their respective communities. It aims to correct people's educational inadequacies to give them access to quality basic education and skills training for their own self-enrichment and to allow them to participate in the social, economic and political activities of their community. Adult education, therefore, has the potential to provide for the educational needs of women who were denied the opportunity of going to school so that they can develop themselves and their communities. Citing Anyanwu (1987), Festus and Adekola (2015:3) posit that adult education can help rural women who lack basic education to acquire knowledge and livelihood skills for self-development in economic activities.



Truly, adult education is meant to develop the poor and to impart the skills they need for self- and community development.

Historically, within the South African context, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) was conceived of in 1997 and offered to adults who had been disadvantaged during apartheid. This type of education aims to develop rural dwellers in disadvantaged communities and to give them access to basic education and skills for their own development and that of their communities. This developmental agenda is embedded in the definition of ABET given by the Department of Education (DoE), which reads as follows:

“Adult basic education and training is the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally, provides access to nationally recognised certificates” (DoE, 1997b:12).

The main aim of ABET is to enhance the socio-economic development of people (rural women in particular) who lack basic education and skills. The fact that apartheid is responsible for the underdevelopment of the majority of rural women and their communities led to the establishment of ABET to compensate for the wrongs of the past by providing basic education and training for participation in the country's economy and to enhance self- and community development. However, ABET failed in the area of training to provide the much-needed socio-economic skills. Aitchison (2004:14) affirms that this area of skills training for self- and community development failed because it has been shelved and poorly managed. This researcher opines that ABET curriculum should have been linked to livelihood skills to impact positively on rural women's lives. By empowering women through knowledge and skills they can look for better opportunities for the fulfilment of their developmental goals. This can help them to contribute meaningfully to community development.

Adult education programmes like ACET, established by DHET (DHET, 2013b:1), hold great value for community development if one considers the millions of people who require basic education, knowledge and skills. Singh (2005:ix) and Erasmus (2010:2) indicate that ACET, in particular is valuable in that its learning activities provide knowledge, skills and the level of moral consciousness that participants need for engaging in the social and economic activities of their various communities. Rural women require knowledge and skills which can help to increase their sense of value and make them capable of self-employment for economic development (FengLiang, Xiaohao & Morgan, 2009:374). When women are developed socially and economically, this has positive effects on community development; all made possible through education, especially ACET. Citing Bown and Tomori (1979), Quan-Baffour (2011:5) asserts that:

“Adult education has to increase people’s physical and mental freedom – to increase their control over themselves, their own lives and the environment in which they live. The ideas imparted by education or released in the mind through education should, therefore, be liberating skills. Adult education thus covers a wide range of educational activities that could assist the individual adult to become a liberated and fully developed citizen of his or her community.”

Adult education, particularly ACET, is an important tool that can free rural women from underdevelopment, but because the majority of these women are illiterate, it becomes difficult for them to be developed in order to improve their living conditions. The call to improve the literacy levels of the millions who require basic education led to the establishment of Adult Education programmes in South Africa after the end of colonial rule in 1994. The aim was to provide basic education and skills training for the poor, particularly rural women, to enhance their socio-economic development, which, in turn, can have a positive effect on community development. Citing Aitchison (2007), Mayombe (2015:80) affirms that adult education programmes such as ACET can help rural women to acquire the skills needed to engage in the country’s socio-economic activities and in so doing improve their lives. The study, therefore, sought to contribute

to the current discussion by investigating whether ACET is playing its role of skills development among rural women in Mthatha, South Africa.

Skills development is an essential element of the developmental process for rural women and their communities. The best programmes and practices in adult education, such as Basic and Vocational Education and ACET in particular, are to be used as an innovative development strategy for rural women. It is the responsibility of the South African government to establish and implement sound legislative policies on adult education so that rural women can have easy access to basic and vocational education. This is because apartheid and other cultural practices and attitudes of black parents have left many South Africans without basic education and training. McKay (2007:286) points out that many South African citizens, predominantly those found in the rural areas are illiterate and lack skills training for socio-economic and community development. If rural women are to be developed socially, economically and educationally, they should be given equal access to basic education. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) ensures the rights of all its citizens to basic education, adult education and skills training so that they can achieve their developmental goals in life and for the community as a whole. It states the following:

“Everyone has the right to a basic education including adult basic education and to further education which the state through reasonable measures must make available all forms of organized education and training that meet the basic learning needs of adults, including literacy and numeracy, as well as the general knowledge, skills and values and attitudes that they require to survive, develop their capacities, live and work in dignity, improve the quality of their lives, make informed decisions, and continue learning.”

Indeed, having equal access to education and for development is a national agenda. Hence, the provision of basic and vocational education and ACET for the disadvantaged must be geared towards their socio-economic transformation and growth.

### **2.3.3 Poverty alleviation among rural women**

Poverty is a serious social issue that most rural women face through their lack of education and skills. Because poverty leads to marginalisation, abuse, low self-esteem and unfair treatment, rural women require freedom from it. For rural women to enhance their livelihoods and alleviate poverty they require basic education, knowledge and skills. To help us better understand the plight of rural women, the researcher sought to explain the concept of poverty and its classifications. These are discussed in the sections below.

#### **2.3.3.1 Defining poverty**

There is no one definition for poverty because it may defer from the context in which it is being discussed. Citing the World Bank (2001a) and May (1998), Mbuli (2009:4) affirms that poverty can be defined from multiple perspectives, based on people's living conditions. A suitable definition of poverty depends on what is being discussed in the context of the present situation. For instance, in the context of the present study, most women living in the rural areas are struggling with the basic necessities of life (needs) such as clothing, shelter, good drinking water and food. In an attempt to define poverty in this context, Sengupta (2008:13) explains that poverty is a lack of safe access to available quantities of basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter and minimum medical care, or insufficient income to live productive and meaningful lives. The researcher of the present study defines poverty similarly, as the inability of rural women to provide for themselves and families the basic needs of life which are common to mankind, e.g. good drinking water, food, clothing and shelter.

Taking another slant, McKay and Vizard (2006:48) define poverty as a gross violation of human rights. They also link it to a lack of socio-economic rights; rights that are instrumental and valuable for poverty alleviation. Access to socio-economic rights is very important in the classification of poverty and it can help individuals to improve their living conditions for human happiness. These include the right to food, water, health

care services and shelter. It is important that rural women are not denied access to these socio-economic rights as it can enrich their standard of living. Bilchitz (2008:133) maintains that the citizens of any country, especially South Africans, should not be deprived of this all-essential right (socio-economic right) and cautions that it must be safeguarded.

### **2.3.3.2 Classifying poverty**

This section elaborates on the different types of poverty. These include absolute poverty, relative poverty and chronic poverty, and they are discussed below:

- ❖ **Absolute poverty:** This has to do with the differences that exist between the poor and the rich and with the fact in any given society these differences are characterised by distinct features. Citing Frye (2005), Tshuma (2012:4011) affirms that there are certain quantitative measures that are used to separate the poor from the rich; a phenomenon that can be summed up in the phrase 'purchasing power' (Tshuma, 2012:4011). The subjects of the present study struggle to provide food, clothing and shelter for survival, as compared to the rich who have the economic ability to buy goods ranging from basic to very sophisticated ones. This difference between the rich and the poor explains poverty in the absolute sense.

The same principle is used when comparing rich and poor countries around the world. This is affirmed by the 1995 Copenhagen declaration which used absolute poverty to differentiate poor countries from rich ones (Richmond, 2007:2). Poor countries are unable to provide for basic human needs such as food, safe drinking water, electricity, sanitation facilities, a clean environment, health care, education and access to adequate information. According to Tshuma (2012:4011), absolute poverty is characterised by a country's citizens experiencing hunger and malnutrition, poor health, lack of access to education and basic services. Many developing countries like South Africa are unable to

provide satisfying essential services for their citizens, especially in the countryside where the majority of rural women live in poverty.

- ❖ **Relative poverty:** This form of poverty relates to individuals having access to resources and how they are able to use them beneficially. Mbuli (2009:21) elucidates that relative poverty deals with access to available resources by individuals and how they are able to manage and use these resources to better their living conditions. In this study, rural women are relatively poor in that they lack the resources to develop their lives economically. Therefore, it goes beyond the monetary comparison between the rich and the poor. To free rural women from this state of relative poverty, they are to be given access to available resources and trained in how to use and manage these resources to improve their living conditions and reduce poverty.
- ❖ **Chronic poverty:** In the medical world, chronic protracted illness is one of the most difficult conditions to deal with. With this in mind, chronic poverty is a condition that has endured for a long period of time and consequently it is a very difficult task to attempt to change these conditions. The majority of rural women who find themselves seriously impoverished are neglected in society. Citing Uccelli (1997), Mbuli (2009:22) affirms that the chronic poverty levels of individuals such as manifests in poor health, malnutrition and a lack of access to resources have resulted in many of them being neglected over time, this making it difficult to address this social issue. It is important to note that chronic poverty includes both absolute and relative poverty and the main focus is on how individuals in an impoverished condition have been deprived of essential social and economic services for a very long period of time and are neglected. Tshuman (2012:4011-4012) points out that people living in poverty (particularly rural women) have been kept in a state of deprivation and are not given any help to deal with their social issues. This condition renders rural women the most vulnerable grouping in society and they are left alone to shoulder the heavy responsibilities of caring for themselves and their households.

### **2.3.3.3 The link between low levels of education, unemployment and poverty in South Africa**

Low levels of education, unemployment and poverty are three important social subjects that cannot be separated from each other. In this section they are linked to each other in a discussion of poverty alleviation among rural women. The poor, especially those in rural areas of South Africa, are deprived of education and training. Rural women in particular have been deprived of primary education (Quan-Baffour, 2012:312). This condition of a lack of education can lead to unemployment and, subsequently, poverty, which means that the provision of basic education for rural women is critically important on a national level. Quan-Baffour (2012:313) affirms that the provision of basic education to empower rural women and reduce poverty is in line with the Millennium Development Goals achievement strategy for South Africa. The use of basic education as a weapon against poverty is discussed in detail in section 2.3.3.4.3 under the heading *The Provision of Basic Education*.

Emphasising the value of education in the lives of rural women for employment and to improve their livelihoods, Preece (2010:482) points out that women who are educated and skilled have better opportunities and access to employment and are able to produce healthy children, which holds the prospect of preventing generational poverty. The researcher opines that all parents, literate or illiterate, can contribute greatly to the educational success of their children in reducing and preventing generational poverty. Adult education, therefore, is the best tool for the development of rural women because, without basic education, knowledge and skills they are condemned to a life of poverty. Being denied an education holds serious social implications for communities and the country at large. According to Aitchison and Alidou (2008:1), a lack of basic education can have negative social implications which can be linked to health issues, e.g. HIV/AIDS; and they can affect the overall development of the country.

Unemployment results in a number of socio-economic complications comprising crime, drug and alcohol abuse, health problems, low self-esteem and lacking capacity to claim

an active share in the economy of South Africa. Panday, Ranchod, Ngcaweni and Seedat (2012:102) explain that unemployed women struggle to participate meaningfully in the economy of the country because they lack knowledge and skills to deal with the concerns and problems experienced in life. Furthermore, Banerjee, Galiani, Levinsohn, McLaren and Woolard (2008:51) indicate that the majority of rural women live in extreme poverty, and, considering that women constitute the largest section of the population, this has serious negative implications for the South African economy. Thus, Armstrong, Lekezwa and Siebrits (2008:16) postulate that education is a key strategy for enabling the poor (rural women) to participate in the social and economic mainstream. Christensen, Peirce, Hartman, Hoffman and Carrier (2007:347-349) concur that women participating in the economy is a critical issue on the national agenda.

The next section discusses programmes that have been developed to target low levels of literacy, unemployment and poverty for the benefit of rural women.

#### **2.3.3.4 Programmes targeting low levels of education, unemployment and poverty in South Africa**

Many rural women are faced with challenging social issues such as discrimination, health care issues, lack of basic education, unemployment and poverty (Mashau & Houghton, 2015:596); John, 2019:192-193). In a developing country such as South Africa, these social ills affect millions of women on a daily basis (McKay, 2007:9). The empowerment of rural women through skills training for economic development and poverty reduction, therefore, is a national responsibility. According to the ANC's (African National Congress) Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP), poverty alleviation and deprivation must be given first priority on the national agenda. The ANC (1994:12) government affirms this in the following way:

“No political democracy can survive and flourish if the majority of its people remain in poverty, without land, without their basic needs being met and without



tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation will, therefore, be the first priority of the democratic Government.”

The ANC government has programmes that focus on poverty reduction, deprivation and a lack of education. The aim is to target millions of people, particularly rural women who were disadvantaged in the past, so that the hostile conditions they have faced and continue to face can be amended. These programmes may include but are not limited to:

- ❖ The Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Programme;
- ❖ Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET); and
- ❖ The Provision of Basic Education.

#### **2.3.3.4.1 The Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Programme**

The phrase Kha Ri Gude originates from Venda where it means “Let Us Learn.” This mass literacy programme has gained currency in contemporary South Africa since it was launched by the Department of Education (DoE) in 2008 (DoE, 2010:6). The popularity of the programme is due to the fact that it has attracted millions of adults who are functionally illiterate (McKay, 2012). Kha Ri Gude targeted all people, including the illiterate, semi-literate and the vulnerable (e.g. women and the disabled). According to Hanemann (2015:19), the Kha Ri Gude programme is a very flexible and accommodating programme which caters for the elderly and physically impaired learners. Millions of adult learners took advantage of this initiative with the aim to transform their lives for the better, and, according to McKay (2015:1), rural women took advantage of it because it was a “last chance” opportunity for them to learn and improve their socio-economic lives.

The establishment of the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign in South Africa has a number of aims, with McKay (2012:n.p.) stating them as follows:

- ❖ To enable 4.7 million functionally illiterate and semi-literate adults (aged above 15 years), including people living with disabilities, to become literate and numerate in one of the 11 official languages by 2012. This was intended to reduce the national rate of illiteracy by 50% by 2015 in line with the government's Education for All (EFA) commitment made in Dakar in 2000, as well as to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on poverty reduction, women's empowerment, HIV and AIDS eradication, environmental protection and sustainable democratisation and peace-building;
- ❖ To fulfil the constitutional right of all citizens to gain access to basic education in their own language (i.e. promote universal access to education);
- ❖ To empower socially disadvantaged people to become self-reliant and to raise their living standards (poverty reduction/alleviation);
- ❖ To enable socially disadvantaged people to participate more effectively in national socio-economic development processes; and
- ❖ To foster social transformation through enhanced civic or public awareness.

To achieve these important goals, opportunities have been created for vast numbers of adults to enrol in the programme. According to Motshekga (2011:16), 2.2 million enrolled in the programme in 2008; a number that increased to about 3 million and may possibly exceed the expected target of 4.7 million. It is important to note that women constitute the majority of participants in the programme. The women who participated in the programme outnumbered the men because they suffered more seriously from having been denied basic education during the apartheid years and on account of certain cultural practices which left many children, especially girls, without education (Baloyi, 2014:616; UNESCO, 2012:14). Driving this programme to success are 40 000 educators, 4000 supervisors and 400 coordinators; mainly volunteers who work tirelessly to make 2.8 million people literate members of their various communities (DBE, 2012).

Although the Kha Ri Gude literacy programme became a milestone for the many who require basic knowledge and skills, it didn't come without its fair share of challenges. Romm and Dichaba (2015:234-235) presented some of these challenges as follows:

- ❖ The programme duration of six months is too short for some of the learners. As the learners are often slow they must be given an extended period of learning time to consolidate the knowledge attained.
- ❖ Problems were encountered with the transferring of graduates from the mass literacy programme to advanced skills training programmes.
- ❖ Many of the learners who underwent the programme complained about a lack of resources with which to boost their businesses, which meant that their businesses collapsed.
- ❖ Access to agricultural products and irrigation is a challenge for many of the learners.
- ❖ The ability for many to sustain their businesses or projects is lacking because profits generated from the established projects are too small and are used to cover their daily needs and not to support the business.

Amidst these challenges, Johnson and Quan-Baffour (2016:290) recommend that for the programme to achieve success in eradicating illiteracy among its learners and equipping them with relevant skills for poverty alleviation, qualified and skilled personnel must be employed to apply teaching and learning methods for adults in various communities. This recommendation perhaps, among others, has kept the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign going until now.

#### **2.3.3.4.2 Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET)**

Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) is a programme that was established by DHET in 2012 at the release of the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training (PSET) (Baatjes & Baatjes, 2008:5). This educational

programme is based on a set of principles and, according to DHET (2017:13), these include the following:

- ❖ Expansion of access to education and training to all youths and adults, especially those who have limited opportunities for structured learning, including learners with disabilities;
- ❖ Diversification and transformation of institutions that promote the goals and objectives of a progressive socio-economic agenda;
- ❖ Provision of good quality and non-formal education and training programmes;
- ❖ Provision of vocational training that prepares people for participation in both the formal and informal economy;
- ❖ Close partnerships with local communities, including local government, civil society organisations, employers' and workers' organisations and alignment of programmes with their needs;
- ❖ Partnerships with government community development projects;
- ❖ Local community participation in governance; and
- ❖ Collaboration and articulation with other sections of the post-school system.

Based on this set of principles, ACET aims to provide education for the personal, social, political and economic development of educationally disadvantaged people, particularly rural women (Baatjes & Chaka, 2012:5; DHET, 2017:11). DHET (2013:1) affirms that ACET will offer programmes that can add to the socio-economic welfare of rural women and the wider community. To ensure this developmental agenda of the programme, all people, especially adult women in rural communities, must have equal rights to quality adult education. According to Baatjes and Chaka (2012:3-4), these rights are enshrined in the Bill of Rights for the Adult Learner and constitute rights to:

- ❖ Equal opportunities for access to relevant learning opportunities throughout life;
- ❖ Educational leave from employment for general, as well as vocational or professional education;

- ❖ Financial aid and educational services at levels comparable to those provided for younger or full-time learners;
- ❖ Encouragement and support in learning subject matter that the learner believes will lead to growth and self-actualisation;
- ❖ A learning environment suitable for adults that includes appropriate instructional materials, media and facilities;
- ❖ Have relevant prior learning evaluated and, when appropriate, recognised for academic credit toward a degree or credential;
- ❖ Participate or be appropriately represented in planning or selecting learning activities in which the learner is engaged;
- ❖ Be taught by qualified and competent instructors who possess appropriate subject-matter qualifications, as well as knowledge and skills relating to the instructional needs of adults;
- ❖ Academic support resources, including instructional technology that can make self-directed learning or distance learning possible;
- ❖ Dependent care and related structures of social support; and
- ❖ Individualised information and guidance leading to further study.

By ensuring these rights for adult learners they will have the opportunities to access basic education and training and for some of them to continue their schooling to improve their skills for the world of work and/or for further studies. DHET (2013a:1) affirms that ACET provides opportunities for adult learners, women especially, who were denied any schooling and thus to have access to education and progress to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and universities in the country. ACET, therefore, can become the live-wire for developing rural women educationally and equipping them with the skills needed for them to improve their standard of living. But, whether ACET is achieving this important goal is the gap that this study sought to fill in.

As emphasised ACET is to improve livelihoods and promote economic inclusion of millions of people, especially rural women, who had little or no schooling to develop

their skills for economic participation. It is important, therefore, that ACET programmes are able to bridge the country's skills and knowledge gap. The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (WP-PSET) emphasised that ACET programmes are to be linked to the work of public programmes to provide the much-needed skills and knowledge (DHET, 2013b:1). According to DHET (2017:18), the programmes of ACET that are aimed at up-skilling rural women may include, but are not limited to;

- ❖ Early Childhood Development;
- ❖ Community Development Works Programmes;
- ❖ Worker Education;
- ❖ Cooperative and Entrepreneurship Education and Training;
- ❖ Plumbing, Construction, Carpentry, Electricity, Welding and Auto Body Repair;
- ❖ Motor Mechanics;
- ❖ Home-Based Care;
- ❖ Parenting and Childcare;
- ❖ Civic Education, Community Mobilisation and Organisation;
- ❖ Expanded Public Workers Programme;
- ❖ Community Health Workers Programme, including HIV/AIDS Education;
- ❖ Information and Communication Technology; and
- ❖ Arts and Crafts.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has established community colleges in the nine provinces of South Africa. One community college in each province with the Community Learning Centres (CLC) being used as satellite campuses (DHET, 2013b:1). According to DHET (2017:10), these colleges are new in the country and only cater for youths and adults who did not have the chance to go to school and qualify for entrance into TVET colleges or universities. However, government has planned to increase the intake of these learners in the ACET programme to one million by 2030. To ensure the success of community colleges, the programme must be properly monitored and managed and DHET has put in place four of these programmes with which to

manage and monitor the education system. Table 2.3 below highlights such monitoring and management programmes and their descriptions.

**Table 2.3: *Programmes for managing community education and training***

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Programme Management: Community Education and Training</b>	This manages and delegates administrative and financial responsibilities. It also directs monitoring and evaluation of the programme.
<b>Community Education and Training Colleges Systems Planning, Institutional Development and Support</b>	It gives supports to management and councils to monitor and evaluate the community education and training system performance against set indicators and to develop regulatory frameworks for the system. It manages and monitors the procurement and supply of teaching and learning support resources. It provides direction for community education and training colleges to enter into partnerships for the utilisation of infrastructure and funding resources. It maps out the institutional landscape for the rollout of the community education and training system, and is responsible for community education and training infrastructure planning and development.
<b>Financial Planning</b>	This department deals with setting up financial management systems. It develops the monetary aspect of community education and training colleges. It also directs and correlates fair

	dispersal of funds to community education and training colleges in accordance with funding standards and criteria for funding these colleges. It keeps track of supply chain management policy, and ensures that all matters relating to finance are audited.
<b>Education, Training and Development Support</b>	This department directs the processes of curriculum development. It provides quality teaching and learning resources and ensures implementation of curriculum and assessment guidelines. It provides continuous development and leadership for lecturers and encourages diversity of programmes in community education and training colleges.

**Source:** [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)

The above monitoring tool for ACET programme indicates that it is the aim of DHET to make the programme work for the people, especially rural women who were most sorely neglected in the past.

#### **2.3.3.4.3 The provision of basic education**

Basic education is a right but apartheid left many rural women without an education. The home was the place for the girl child, which is why these women lack basic education. Citing Bhola, Rule (2006:116) explains that the phrase “time is burning” reflects a waste of human potential and resources, as seen in the fact that most rural women were not allowed to go to school. This neglect has led to unemployment and poverty in the country today. The call for basic education becomes an important means for growing a literate society and for poverty reduction in general.



In developing countries like South Africa, basic education is used to change the educational state of its citizens from illiteracy to literacy and from semi-literate to literate. Quan-Baffour (2012:1) supports the idea that most progressive leaders in South Africa have used basic education as an innovative strategy for poverty reduction. Illiteracy can hinder rural women's participation in economic activities and this can lead to marginalisation, unemployment and poverty. In view of this negative effect of illiteracy, this researcher opines that to make basic education useful its provision should be tied to skills training to equip rural women with livelihood skills for their socio-economic freedom and development. After two decades of the provision of basic education since 1994, however, many black South Africans, mainly rural women, are still plagued by major socio-economic deprivations. Quan-Baffour (2012:310) has this to say:

“The dire poverty in which thousands of rural women still find themselves – almost two decades after political freedom in South Africa – might be the direct consequence of the lack of access (or inequality in access) to education during their childhood. Although apartheid has been abolished, the consequence of decades of discrimination is evidenced by the lack of knowledge and skills for employment among most women in the rural communities of South Africa.”

The provision of basic education is indeed necessary as there are still many rural women who require basic knowledge and skills for livelihood. These conditions under which most rural women live call for women to be given opportunities and access to basic education. The aim is not only to compensate through providing skills training for employment, but is also to bring about equality and social justice.

Basic education is an important tool for advancement in life and the socio-economic advancement of rural women is of major national concern as impoverished individuals have a great desire to see change in their lives as they progress. These changes can be physical, spiritual, social, political or economic. According to Burke and Noumair (2015:1), development is a process of desirable change or growth of individuals and this change or growth should be evident in the lives of the people. Many rural women have

been given opportunities to gain a basic education after apartheid, but they are still not doing well in their economic lives (Mayer et al., 2011:11). Putting a figure to this statement, McKay (2007:285-286) postulates that about 60% of South Africans under the age of 25, rural women in particular, are economically inactive because they still lack basic education and skills.

It is important that rural women are given access to basic knowledge and skills not only for their own socio-economic development, but also for the future generation. The future generation (children) also needs to profit from the progress made in development. For this reason, sustainable human development and resources are to be preserved for the members of the next generation, rather than to abuse or destroy them. Anand and Sen (2000:2030) affirm this sentiment by saying:

“We cannot abuse and plunder our common stock of natural assets and resources leaving the future generations unable to enjoy the opportunities we take for granted today. We cannot use up, or contaminate our environment as we wish, violating the rights and the interests of the future generations.”

Undeniably, the developmental progress that rural women attain in the present should be passed on to their children. The opportunities that they have now should be preserved to ensure sustainability for the future generation, or else the fight for human sustainable development will be meaningless.

## **2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study, discussing Maslow's Theory of Motivation which emphasised that human needs are sequential ranging from the most pressing need of humans; the theory of Critical Pedagogy emphasised the need for a critical reflection into adult education practices with benefits to rural women; and the Empowerment Theory which emphasised the need for individuals to assess their problems and challenges and make informed choices to

transform their lives. The literature abounds with references to important issues such as apartheid policy and lacking basic education and skills for rural women; adult education and community development, as well as poverty alleviation among the rural women of South Africa. All of the themes discussed under the literature study addressed one important issue that rural women must be empowered with knowledge and skills to engage in economic activities for socio-economic development and subsequently reduce poverty. The literature study was done to put the study in the right perspective of the phenomenon under investigation and aligned it in relation to the stated questions and objectives.

The next chapter gives a description of the study's research methodology and design, stopping to elaborate on the research approach and design, population, sampling procedure and sample size. It also describes the data collection procedure, the data analysis, research ethics and trustworthiness.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study is to explore the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction in the Mthatha district of South Africa. The present chapter discusses the research design and methodology employed by the researcher to investigate and answer the following research questions:

- ❖ How can adult and community education and training contribute to the empowerment of rural women?
- ❖ What is the role of adult and community education and training in the skills development of rural women?
- ❖ How can adult and community education and training contribute to rural women's economic development?
- ❖ To what extent can adult and community education and training help in poverty reduction among rural women?

The elements of the research methodology discussed include the research approach and design; population, sample and sampling technique; instrumentation and data collection. The chapter also discusses the research paradigm, credibility, trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Pansiri (2005:192) defines a research paradigm as the diverse opinions of the social world, based on assumptions that are different in the nature of science and society. Johnson (2015:71) also describes a research paradigm as an entire set of shared beliefs, values and techniques that encompass every society or community. In this

study, a research paradigm is defined as a philosophical perception that serves as a guideline for the researcher as he undertakes the research. Savin-Baden and Major (2013:18) state that the techniques or methods applied in any research can be fruitless if the philosophy surrounding the research is ignored or not properly understood. Understanding the origins of and circumstances of the development of different philosophies can help the researcher to be sure of philosophies that are in agreement or compatible with his own research. This helps him to make research choices that are reliable and to ultimately conduct a trustworthy research study. It is against this background and the desire to conduct quality research that the researcher adopted the interpretivist research paradigm for his work.

The interpretivists, according to Bryman (2016:28), opine that the discussion of social science issues, i.e. people and their social environment, are arguably different from discussions of natural science issues. The reason is that human behaviour should not follow a set of rules or be controlled by external factors because human beings are not objects or robots. As such they cannot be mechanically controlled or manipulated (see Addae & Quan-Baffour, 2015:156). Humans are acquainted with their environment and are able to make their own decisions based on their experiences. This explains human actions and the way they behave (Bryman & Bell, 2014:16). To better understand the social behaviour of humans, it is crucial to understand the subjective meaning of human experiences. Wahyuni (2012:69-72) describes the role of the researcher in the interpretivist paradigm as a way to describe a social phenomenon which influences his choice in conducting research such as how to enhance reliability and the choice of methodology to be used. Hence, efforts should be made to relate well with participants and to understand the individuals through their experiences. The researcher, therefore, involved himself with the real-life experiences of the study's participants (rural women). The above assertion makes it clear that the objective of interpretivism is to understand how people give meaning to objects, environmental conditions and human behaviour. There is a need to emphasise, however, that the way people explain other people's opinions and views can and do differ because they are experienced differently.

An interpretivist research paradigm was adopted for the study because, it helped the researcher to be involved or align himself with the social phenomena of the people, in this case, rural women. The researcher finds himself in an area where the local people, especially rural women, are not empowered to acquire the skills they need to help them become economically viable to reduce poverty, as experienced by them in their respective communities. This pressing problem was observed by the researcher in the rural areas of the Mthatha district in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. As a resident in a rural area, he has seen first-hand the difficulties of rural women as they care for their families, especially school children. Some of these children come to school hungry, but fortunately the feeding scheme provided by the government is of great help to parents who are poor and cannot afford to give their children a square meal. The researcher, through qualitative interviews, is able to give a good account of the pressing occurrences as he has experienced it in the area and by relating to the women. For this reason, the researcher has chosen to foreground the interpretivist research paradigm. The aim is to explore and diagnose the problems that rural women face in Mthatha, the area under investigation.

### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

A qualitative research approach was adopted to conduct the study in order to explore and understand the meaning of the social phenomenon of people, in this case, rural women. This approach was relevant because it helped the researcher to relate well with the participants as he was in close contact with them during the interviews. According to Flick (2018:14), a qualitative research approach is a way of collecting and analysing textual data using various methods such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, conversational analysis, observation and ethnographies, based on the context in which the study will be conducted. It is also characterised by a systematic and laborious form of investigation. Bashir and Azeem (2008:35-45) consummate that qualitative collection of information is important to help researchers understand processes that have developed over time, their social setting, and to be able to hear the voices of

participants through direct quotations. In this study, the researcher employed individual interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis.

Creswell (2014:4) also indicates that a qualitative research approach is used to explore and understand individuals' social problems. This research process ascribes to questions and procedures used in the collection of data through in-depth interviews. It helps the researcher to understand and make vivid interpretations of the data collected. The study employed a qualitative research approach using elements such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and documents analysis to explore the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction.

### **3.3.1 Justification for the qualitative research approach**

The researcher employed a qualitative research approach for the study because it helped him to answer the research questions stated in section 3.1 scientifically. Furthermore, this research approach is useful for exploring and interpreting information based on participants' views and analysed in an interpretative and inductive way (Creswell & Poth, 2016:17-20). Again, a qualitative approach allows the researcher to be part of participants' real-life experiences to explore their persistent problems. Creswell and Clark (2011:207) postulate that a qualitative research approach draws on an inductive course rather than a deductive one. In other words, this approach is used to understand the participants' experiences and perceptions and relate with them from their own social setting or context.

The qualitative research approach possesses strong advantages that benefit both participants and researchers. For example,

- ❖ It allows participants to provide the researcher with meaningful descriptions. The researcher, in turn, can use his own words to describe and document information instead of being restricted to a set of rules. This allows participants to give truthful information freely.

- ❖ It allows the researcher to probe participants' responses to ensure that participants give answers to questions in the way it is expected of them.
- ❖ It allows for flexibility in the use of knowledge, expertise and skills to explore interesting ideas and themes raised by participants (Creswell & Clark, 2011:210).

Although qualitative research is important, it has also been identified as a method with some inherent limitations or flaws. Denzin and Lincoln (2013:1-5) have presented some of the limitations of using a qualitative research approach. They argue that,

- ❖ It is more biased than the quantitative approach because it is the researcher who selects what quotations he would like to comment on.
- ❖ The analysis and interpretation of qualitative data is a difficult exercise which consumes a lot of time.
- ❖ The qualitative research is not of much value when it comes to revealing scientific truths. However, when research questions and goals are framed appropriately, the qualitative approach could even surpass the quantitative research methods.

The researcher believes that the strengths of the qualitative research approach override its limitations. This research approach was deemed relevant for the present study's purposes because it helped him to elicit valuable and reliable information from participants and because it provides a framework within which participants can respond in ways that accurately and thoroughly represent their points of view around the topics or themes at hand. The mentioned shortcomings were managed by making sure that the researcher spent enough time to analyse and interpret the data and all relevant quotations used in this report.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Individual scholars have defined research design in different ways. According to Maree (2007:70), a research design is a systemic plan or procedure used to select



participants, the techniques used to gather information and the data analysis process. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:79) emphasise that a research design involves the strategy used to describe the conditions and procedures of data collection and how the data is analysed. Qualitative research approaches can take numerous different shapes in terms of their design. In this research project, an exploratory phenomenological design was adopted. Moustakas (1994) defines a phenomenological research design as a strategy for investigating a phenomenon in which a researcher classifies, understands and describes human experiences truthfully. The researcher of the present study did this by studying a small number of participants – rural women - through interviews and focus group discussions, as he relates to their lived experiences.

The researcher primarily used the qualitative research method to explore the experiences of rural women and describes, as accurately as possible, how they construct meaning. Merriam and Simpson (2000:98) state that:

“The overall purposes of qualitative phenomenological research are to achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, to delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and to describe how people interpret what they experience.”

The researcher seeks to make sense of and describe the phenomena as accurately as he perceived them and as perceived by the study's participants (Finlay, 2009). Furthermore, the researcher adopted this phenomenological method because it helped him to explore the socio-economic development of rural women, through skills training for poverty reduction in Mthatha, i.e. the area under investigation. It also helped the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences without any preconceptions (Shaw & Glowacki-Dudka, 2018:28). Van Wyk (2012:8) affirms that exploratory phenomenological design is an appropriate qualitative research design which can be used to better understand participants' experiences and the problem under investigation. This phenomenological method was deemed most useful for the

present study because the task at hand is to understand the experiences of the rural women in Mthatha.

### **3.4.1 Research population**

In research, a population refers to a particular group of people in a definite geographical location about which the research is undertaken (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010:60). Bryman and Bell (2014:16) also postulate that a population describes a universe of people from which a sample is drawn. The total population of four selected ACET centres comprised of a population of 450 people, including men. Out of this number, only 400 adult women were selected to form the study's population. The chosen population was appropriate because women constitute the majority of the wider population in the district and are most severely affected by the problem of skills training, unemployment and poverty (Mayer et al., 2011:7).

### **3.4.2 Sample and sampling technique**

Maree (2007:79) defines sampling as a process used by a researcher to choose a study's sample population. It is also a process of selecting a small unit or sample from within a population. A sample is a small part or a unit of a population that has been carefully selected from an overall population which is to be studied (Cooper & Schindler, 2007:717; Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010:60). In line with the above viewpoints, this researcher employed the purposive sampling technique to select 35 female participants' from four (4) different ACET learning centres in Mthatha, South Africa. The participants comprised of 20 female learners who had registered for ACET programmes at the four (4) selected centres, four (4) female educators at the four (4) learning centres, seven (7) ACET ex-learners of the four (4) selected centres and four (4) additional learners from another centre to engage in a focus-group discussion. These participants were purposively selected because they are information rich and are directly linked to the phenomenon under investigation. Bouchet, Ballouli and Bennett (2011:84-92) justify the use of purposive sampling by the researcher to select participants in that it allows one to

gain unique insight into issues concerning the affected women. This technique also helped the researcher to select suitable participants who gave dependable information. This sample was chosen because it was deemed most appropriate for qualitative research (Niccolai et al., 2016:843-844; Saunders et al., 2018:1902). The participants selected for the study, as indicated above, were purposively chosen on the basis of the following criteria:

- ❖ Educators must be female employees at ACET centres;
- ❖ Learners must be registered for tuition at the centres;
- ❖ Participants must be willing to be involved in the study;
- ❖ Participants must be information rich and committed to sharing reliable information; and
- ❖ Participants must have undergone the ACET programme at the selected centres.

These criteria were appropriate in that it helped the researcher to select suitable research participants who helped to complete the study. With permission from ACET centre managers, the researcher used learners' admission registers to verify that participants selected for the study are indeed registered learners at ACET centres. By selecting the right participants the researcher gathered credible information from participants as they were knowledgeable about ACET programmes.

#### **3.4.2.1 Learner participants in the study**

From the sample of 35 participants, 20 learners were purposively selected for individual interviews. These learners were registered for ACET programmes and selected from 4 different ACET centres (4 from each centre). The majority of the learners had not completed their Matric certification (Grade 12). Some of them enrolled for Grade 10 but dropped out of their schooling. This was mostly due to lacking financial support and because some of them are orphans. One learner had completed Matric but failed three subjects and consequently enrolled at the centre for the Matric 'top-up' as it is known at

the various centres. It is important to note that all the learners selected for the study are unskilled and unemployed, and most likely are living in poverty. These learners have hope that the programmes they have enrolled for can help them change their lives socially and economically.

#### **3.4.2.2 Former learner participants**

The researcher purposefully selected seven former ACET learners for the study. These ex-learners have successfully undergone the ACET programmes and at the time, two had been working although their jobs were of a low quality; one being a domestic worker and the other a kitchen assistant. Two years after graduation the other five learners were still unemployed. The aim of sampling these learners for the study was to ascertain their past experiences and to determine how the ACET programmes had benefitted them. It was important to hear from the learners themselves on how they felt they had benefitted from the training they received. The identifying of such individuals was laborious because the majority of former learners had moved to other provinces, leaving no information about their whereabouts. The method that yielded the best results in this regard was to consult registers and admission records. The researcher sought permission from the centre managers to gain access to learners' information (see Appendix C). In these records he found mobile phone numbers by which to contact the learners and to ask them for their participation. An arrangement was made to conduct the interviews at a place deemed convenient for the participants. For those whose circumstances did not allow them a face to face interview, an arrangement was made to conduct a telephonic interview.

#### **3.4.2.3 Educator participants**

Educator participants were purposively selected to engage in a one on one individual interview. Female educators were chosen since the study was centered on rural women and all of them, at the time, were contract (annually renewable) employees at the selected ACET centres. The educators are responsible for administering knowledge and

skills to the learners, but they also plan and monitor education-related community development projects. Furthermore, they are responsible for identifying the problems learners face in their studies and for helping to recommend alternative solutions to these problems. Three of the educators are professionally qualified, whereas one of them was not qualified at the time. Of the three educators, one has a Diploma in Education, a National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) and an ABET certificate. Another educator is in possession of an ABET certificate and a NPDE. The third educator has a Diploma in Education. The educator who was not professionally qualified is in possession of an N6 marketing certificate. All of the educators were not qualified to teach level 4 ACET because the subject content constitutes skills training. These educators do not have any special skills to teach learners; a clear indication that the learners lack the necessary livelihood skills to develop themselves economically for poverty reduction.

#### **3.4.2.4 Focus group interview participants**

Four learners made up the sample of focus group participants; these being selected from four different ACET centres (one from each selected centre). They are all registered learners at the centres for adult education. Four learners were involved in a focus group discussion because the study centred on four centres. These learners are different from the 20 learners that were selected for individual interviews. These learners only have standard 7 (i.e. Grade 9) certificates and all of them lack skills and are unemployed; an indication that they might drop out of the programme without adequate financial support from either their families or government. The researcher used the focus group discussion method because it allowed for the emergence of varying views since the learners were selected from different centres.

### **3.5 SELECTING AND ACCESSING RESEARCH SITES**

#### **3.5.1 Selecting the research sites**

Before any data can be collected for a research study, a research site must be identified. The research site can be the physical socio-cultural environment where the researcher conducts the study. In this study, four ACET centres in the rural areas of Mthatha were selected. The centres are located in the Department of Public Works and the Efata School for the disabled (deaf and blind). The centres all operate similarly (i.e. having classes in the morning and afternoon), with different centre managers. This is due to a lack of space and inadequate resources. Many of the learners enrolled for ACET programmes at these centres are from disadvantaged backgrounds in the area. The Mthatha district belongs to the Eastern Cape Province, which is considered the poorest province in the country. The socio-economic condition of the majority of rural women in the area is very low. The women live in poverty and are marginalised in society (Johnson & Dichaba, 2013:541), with their only means or source of livelihood being the social grants provided by the government (Johnson & Dichaba, 2013:541). Since this research project focuses on the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction in the Mthatha area, the researcher purposefully selected these centres as appropriate sites for the study.

#### **3.5.2 Accessing research sites**

It is important to consider the ethics of research before accessing research sites. The researcher applied for and obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the University Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix A). This ethics clearance certificate helped the researcher to approach authorities such as DHET and the various ACET centres for permission to conduct the study. He furthermore requested letters that would enable him to gain access to the ACET centres in the district.

Another area of access to research sites that the researcher considered constituted his relationship with the participants. This was important because gaining access to research sites does not always guarantee access to the data needed for the study. He built trust with participants by explaining to them their role, and by assuring them that information given and shared would be treated as confidential. The researcher informed them of the timeframe of the study so that participants were not inconvenienced during the data collection process (see Appendix D).

### **3.6 PILOT STUDY**

Before undertaking the main research project, the researcher conducted a pilot study. He did this with only four participants who were selected for the pilot study only, i.e. three female learners and one female educator. The participants were deemed appropriate because the study centred on women and involved female learners and educators. These participants were also selected because they are involved in ACET programmes and could give credible information. The researcher used these participants to try out the research questions. Eldridge et al. (2016:1-8) affirm that a pilot study refers to a smaller-scale investigation or a trial that is undertaken before the main research project ensues. The researcher envisaged a number of benefits in conducting a pilot study for his study;

- ❖ He conducted a pilot study because he wanted to know how suitable his interview questions would be to the problem investigated. This is emphasised by Tekampe et al. (2019:1-3) affirm that a pilot study investigates the feasibility or practicability of a much larger study.
- ❖ He conducted a pilot study in order to ascertain the best set of interview questions that would be appropriate for the collection of the study's data.
- ❖ Further, a pilot study gives the researcher an opportunity to refine his data collection plans, the content and type of research questions used in the data collection process.

- ❖ The pilot study assisted the researcher to amend the questions he intended to ask participants in the study, i.e. to make the necessary changes to interview questions which were initially found to be inappropriate and ambiguous. He, therefore, made sure that the participants understood the research questions.

## **3.7 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION**

### **3.7.1 Research instruments**

The main research instruments which were used for the collection of data in this study were interviews and documentary analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:79; Creswell, 2014:4). Interviews took the form of in-depth individual and focus group discussions. The individual interviews created an atmosphere of relaxation in the participants in order for them to provide reliable information. The focus group discussion also allowed for the emergence of varying views and ideas since members were selected from four different ACET centres. The researcher made use of semi-structured in-depth individual and focus group interview guides (see Appendices E, F, G & I). The interviews were conducted with the participants in a face to face format. Four educators were purposively selected from the four different ACET centres to engage in a face to face in-depth interview. The focus group discussion was held with four female learners; one participant being selected from each of the four different ACET centres to form a focus group of four individuals. This was done so that the researcher could retrieve a wide range of views from the participants. The use of both individual and focus group data collection instruments ensured that the information gathered was credible, dependable and trustworthy. With the participants' consent, all the interviews conducted were audio recorded and transcribed into text at a later stage. This helped the researcher to keep accurate records of the data collected. Field notes were also used during the data collection process (Nichols et al., 2013:350-367), which helped the researcher to focus and also to keep track of follow-up questions asked.



### **3.7.1.1 Reliability and validation of research instruments**

In considering the reliability of the research instruments, the interview items were cross-checked by the researcher's promoter in order to determine their suitability, applicability and stability. As mentioned earlier, these interview questions were pre-tested through a pilot study to ensure reliability and credibility. Again, the researcher validated the research instruments through triangulation by Rothbauer (2008:892) explained that;

“Triangulation is a multi-method approach to data collection and data analysis. The basic idea underpinning the concept of triangulation is that the phenomena under study can be understood best when approached with a variety or a combination of research methods.”

The researcher triangulated the data collection process of this study by using one on one interviews, a focus group discussion with selected participants and documentary analysis in the collection of data. In the process of triangulation interviews were conducted with 31 of the participants which comprised 20 female ACET learners, four (4) female educators and seven (7) former ACET learners, while four (4) additional participants were engaged in a focus group discussion. The researcher, then use the information gathered from the documentary analysis to triangulate the process of data collection. The researcher carried out this process of triangulation by presenting all the participants for interviews and focus group discussion with the same set of interview questions. The results or data collected from these two instruments were compared with the results gathered from the documentary analysis. The researcher did this to check for differences and similarities from the data obtained from the three instruments. In addition, the researcher compared the results from the three sets of instruments to check for consistency in the data collected and the instruments used. Citing Patton (1990), Addae (2016:149-150) affirms this researcher action, stating that it is important to check for consistency in the data collected after the use of triangulation methods.

### **3.7.2 Data collection**

Data collection in qualitative research uses methods such as interviews, observations, documents and audio and visual materials (Creswell, 2014:4). Information was obtained mainly by means of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured in-depth interview items were presented to all participants in an organised way and probing questions were asked by the researcher to elicit in-depth understanding that enhanced effective response (Tan et al., 2019:169). Interviews were recorded with the participants' consent as they voluntarily signed consent forms. The recorded information helped the researcher to keep accurate records which were later transcribed into text. He later referred or listened to the audio recording to correct certain mistakes that were made as he transcribed the data collected. This form of interview created an atmosphere that was conducive for participants to express their experiences and feelings freely regarding the issues discussed (Dali, 2011:84)). During the interview process, notes were taken to help the researcher to focus and keep track of follow-up questions that were asked and in the process of collecting data, the researcher often interrupted participant responses to get clarity on responses which were unclear.

### **3.7.3 The use of a research assistant in data collection**

A major component of the data collection process constituted the use of a research assistant. The study was conducted in the rural areas of the Mthatha district. The researcher is not well versed in the language of the local people although he can make some sense of it. However, it was necessary for him to employ a female research assistant to aid communication with the participants as they too are not well versed in the English Language. The choice of female assistant was motivated by the fact that she could speak both Isixhosa and English fluently and the study centred on women. Also, selecting a female assistant was appropriate because it allowed the women (participants) to freely share their knowledge and experiences. Although English is the medium of instruction at the centres, the local language is often used to explain ideas and views. The assistant, therefore, plays the role of a mediator, translator and an

interpreter between the participants and the researcher. In order for the assistant to carry out his duties effectively and efficiently, she prepared well and worked closely with the researcher so as not to deviate from the aims of the research. Care was taken for the assistant not to take over the research process and a mutual understanding was created between them.

### **3.7.4 Data collection procedure**

The researcher used three important techniques to collect data. These included in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis. The sections below discuss these data collection procedures.

#### **3.7.4.1 In-depth individual interviews**

In-depth individual interviews were considered to be the most suitable research method to investigate the phenomenon under study. This method was selected because it was open-ended and allowed for the discovery of new ideas. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:79) stress the importance of using this method as it uses open-response questions to obtain data on how individuals see their world and how they explain and make sense of the important happenings in their lives. The use of individual interviews was beneficial to the researcher in that;

- ❖ They allowed genuine exploration of the participants' feelings and experiences as regards the effect of ACET on the socio-economic lives of rural women.
- ❖ They allowed systematic and steady collection of the data from the participants and at the same time maintaining some degree of tractability to allow the researcher to collect and record useful information (Creswell & Clark, 2011:210).

As the researcher asked questions and the participants responded, he wrote down some important points to enable him to relate and rethink the phenomenon under discussion. Wilson (2010:137) affirms that individual interviews go beyond the asking of

questions and responding to them. It involves systematically recording and documenting the collected information to better investigate the meaning and to achieve an understanding of the issue discussed. As opposed to quantitative research where structured questions and responses are available to research participants, the researcher employed suggestions made by Ehigie and Ehigie (2005:627) who agree that interviews take place in a conversational style as compared to structured interviews in quantitative research. The purpose of Ehigie and Ehigie's suggestion was to allow the researcher to use his interview technique to discover what was in the research participants' minds. This flexible process gave the researcher the opportunity to constantly review the research questions and carefully assess the nature of data already collected (Watt, 2007:92).

The trust that exists between the interviewer and the interviewee is important in gaining access to relevant data. The researcher's frequent visit to the centres helped him to facilitate trust and confidence between himself and the participants. He established good rapport with the participants which enabled him to access information for the study. Before the interview began, the researcher briefed the participants on the purpose and process of the study, and their role in it (see Appendix D). The researcher secured consent (see Appendix H) from each interviewee to audio record the interview and information that they provided. According to Dali (2011:84), this allowed for a relaxed atmosphere in which the researcher encouraged active listening, responding to the interviewee, prompting and clarifying, as well as accepting and avoiding criticism. The interview schedule helped the researcher to ensuring that he did not omit any of the questions (Wilson, 2010:143). In formulating the interview schedules, the researcher made sure to avoid ambiguous questions, difficult language, misleading questions, incomplete questions, and vague questions. Instead he asked questions that were simple, clear and understandable.

### **3.7.4.2 Focus group discussion**

To gain the information needed for the study, a focus group interview was needed as one of the data collection instruments. The interview questions presented to the participants for interviews were the same set of questions presented to the participants for the focus group discussion. The researcher did this to ensure consistency (Addae, 2016:149-150) in the data collected from the instruments used. A focus group discussion is a technique which involves the use of semi-structured, in-depth group interviews involving participants who are purposively selected for an investigation into a research problem (Rabiee, 2004:655). The researcher, therefore, chose four participants for this discussion. These participants were purposively selected from four different ACET centres, one participant from each centre. This data collection tool was used by the researcher to discover more about the experiences of the participants, their opinions, desires and concerns in a conversational style (Krueger & Casey, 2015:516; Koskei & Simiyu, 2015:108). According to Krueger and King (2006:67), this data collection tool is important in a qualitative approach as it is used to gather valuable information.

The focus group discussion held a number of advantages for both the researcher and the participants, e.g.,

- ❖ It offered a quick way to learn from the participants (Debus, 1988, cited in Escalada & Heong, 2011:1).
- ❖ It was a less expensive technique for gathering information on the views and opinions of the participants (Boateng, 2012:54).
- ❖ It enabled the researcher to freely interrelate with the research participants (Barbour & Kritzing, 2004:118).
- ❖ It gave the researcher an opportunity to put together information that could not have been easily collected by other means (Krueger & King, 2006:67).
- ❖ It helped the participants to express their views and experiences and clearly explain their ideas about the issues discussed (Barbour & Kritzing, 2004:123).

- ❖ It provided the research participants with the prospect of acquiring knowledge from one another in a more relaxed and conversational atmosphere (Dali, 2011:81).

Although focus group discussions are important, they need to be managed well so that the focus of the discussion is not lost, i.e. the discussion should be kept on track. In doing so, the researcher adhered to a semi-structured interview guide which helped him to focus on the issues discussed in the group. The researcher referred to this guide when he noticed any form of deviation from the discussion. Escalada and Heong (2011:1) affirm that a semi-structured interview guide is like a roadmap which guides the researcher in dealing with the issues concerned. The researcher followed this guide to keep his interview discussion on track. Before the focus group discussion began, the researcher explained the aims of the research study which were further broken down into smaller themes to provide a clear direction on the issues discussed. The researcher wrote down some notes as the discussion progressed and in addition to not-taking, the interviews were audio recorded. Interviews recorded were later transcribed into text, this being done with the permission of the participants since they had voluntarily signed consent forms (see Appendices H & J). As the interview unfolded the researcher did not seek to find fault and argue with participants, endeavouring to encourage and support them. As a result, a good relationship was established and participants were willing to give more detailed information to make the study more purposeful.

An important area of the focus group discussion comprised the technique of probing. The aim of probing is to obtain more substantive information from participants. Citing McKay (1998:8), Koskei and Simiyu (2015:110) postulate that probing gives the researcher the opportunity to deeply and confidently investigate the phenomenon under study. In other words, the researcher is able to ask additional or supplementary questions to seek deeper meaning behind the issues raised and to gain a better understanding of them.

### 3.7.4.3 Documentary analysis

According to Bowen (2009:27), documentary analysis is a systematic process in which data is reviewed and information gathered. This data can be found in a printed or digital form (Bowen, 2009:27). In other words, it is a process by which the researcher investigates documents for data and is a means for collecting data from secondary sources. In this study, the data collected through documentary analysis included government gazettes, policy documents, centre registers and admission records. To gain access to such documents the researcher sought permission from the Centre Managers of the selected centres. Examples of the documents consulted were centre registers of learner attendance, admission records, centre manager records of information, letters and minute books. These documents helped the researcher to access a rich source of information for the study. In order to analyse these documents, the researcher made use of descriptive content analysis which aims to systematically identify and describe the information gathered (Sarantakos, 2005, cited in Mayombe, 2014:113).

However, since this source of gathering data is not a primary source, he (the researcher) carefully selected data so as not to be biased, but to satisfy the research purpose. Against this backdrop, Atkinson and Coffey (1997:47) caution that,

“We should not use documentary sources as surrogates for other kinds of data. We cannot, for instance, learn through records alone how an organisation actually operates day-by-day. Equally, we cannot treat records—however ‘official’—as firm evidence of what they report. ... That strong reservation does not mean that we should ignore or downgrade documentary data. On the contrary, our recognition of their existence as social facts alerts us to the necessity to treat them very seriously indeed. We have to approach them for what they are and what they are used to accomplish.”

The researcher, therefore, read through the document thoroughly and linked it to the interviews and focus group discussion. The attendance registers and admission records of the ACET centres were read thoroughly for an in-depth understanding. This helped him to collect detailed and relevant information from the documents which he then categorised, coded and interpreted without bias. He furthermore gave a detailed description of the demographic representation of participants selected for the study and how these details convey meaning.

Documentary analysis added value to the present study in that it is used in addition to interviews and focus group discussions to triangulate the data collected. Citing Denzin (1970), Bowen (2009:28) affirms that documentary analysis is used with other data collection techniques such as interviews and observation, as a means of triangulation. The researcher made use of this triangulation approach in order to make his study more credible and trustworthy. Documentary analysis was useful where direct questioning of the participants became difficult. Also, it supplemented and supported the data collected from the interviews and focus group discussion.

### **3.8 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

In a qualitative research study it is important for the researcher to consider the issues of credibility and trustworthiness. According to Yilmaz (2013:319), credibility is the extent to which results are constant over time using the same number of participants and methodology. Anney (2014:276) defines credibility as the confidence of truth that is embedded in the findings of a research study. In ensuring credibility, the researcher used peer debriefing to solicit guidance from experienced researchers and was guided by the study's promoter to improve the quality of the findings. Hadi and Closs (2016:6) affirm that peer debriefing provides researchers with the opportunity to test and improve the quality of their findings. In addition, he ensured credibility by triangulating the study with different sources of data or research instruments – in-depth interviews, focus group discussion and documentary analysis. Member check was also used by the researcher to ensure credibility. This technique means that data and interpretation must be



continuously checked as they are derived from participants (Guba, 1981, cited in Anney, 2014:277). The researcher used this strategy to eliminate bias when analysing and interpreting the data collected.

Moon et al. (2016:2) indicates that trustworthiness or credibility is the extent to which findings of a research study are accurate overtime. This is influenced by the techniques and instruments used, the data collected and presented, and subsequently the findings derived. In other words, the description of results obtained from a research study must be truthful and must represent the information collected from participants. To ensure trustworthiness, strategies such as dependability, transferability, confirmability and credibility are used. In this study, credibility was used to ensure trustworthiness. Pandey and Patnaik (2014:5747) consummate that ensuring credibility is an important means of establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative study. The researcher triangulated the data collection tools to make his study trustworthy. In addition to the triangulation of research instruments, he conducted a pilot study to test his research questions for suitability and made adjustments where necessary to improve the study's trustworthiness. The interviews and focus group discussion were recorded and transcribed into text and this text was cross-checked by the researcher. Where there were doubts, the researcher re-played the recorded interviews to correct them. Probing was also used by the researcher to ensure trustworthiness. He asked a series of questions and sometimes repeated them to get clarity on answers or responses to the issues discussed and investigated.

### **3.9 ETHICS ISSUES CONSIDERED IN THE STUDY**

To ensure efficacy, transparency, validity and reliability of the research results, the researcher considered certain ethical values for the research participants (Chaska, 2008:57). According to Creswell and Clark (2011:201), ethical consideration ensures that the researcher is required to consider the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants in a study. As suggested by Gajjar (2013:9-10), the researcher practiced the subsequent rules of ethical consideration throughout the research process.

### **3.9.1 Permission**

Tilley et al. (2005:278) emphasise that researchers should seek and obtain permission from relevant authorities before recruiting participants for a research study. The researcher did this by obtaining permission from relevant authorities such as the ACET Centre Managers (see Appendix C) before embarking on this research project.

### **3.9.2 Informed consent**

The researcher informed participants about the purpose of the research study (Nijhawan et al., 2013:134) and asked them to voluntarily sign consent forms. The participants were also informed about the way in which the research would be conducted and when it would formally end. This was to make them aware of the time that would be needed for participation and to offer them the opportunity to assess whether their schedule allowed participation (Chaska, 2008:57). No participant was obliged to participate in the study and they were informed that they could withdraw their participation at any stage.

### **3.9.3 Right to anonymity and confidentiality**

The researcher ensured that the participants remained anonymous, consequently withholding their identities throughout the research project (Gajjar, 2013:14). Codes were assigned to the participants as identifying markers. Any responses given by research participants were treated as confidential. Participants were assured that their privacy and identity would be anonymous and safeguarded from public exposure during and after the research, and, providing participants with these rights shows that the research project cannot be identified with individual responses and identities (Wiles et al., 2008:417). Therefore, this particular study did not expose any of the participants' identifying information as per the study rules. The researcher made sure that their rights to remain anonymous and confidential were protected and the researcher respected the participants' views and integrity. As such, confidential information about participants

was not shared with others as per the ethics protocol. All the research participants' information or records were maintained and kept in a secure place.

### **3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter 3 discussed the methodology and design used by the researcher to carry out the research project. The qualitative approach and an exploratory design were adopted for the study. This approach and design were deemed appropriate because the instruments used to collect data such as documentary analysis, interviews and focus group discussion allowed participants to interact, listen and freely relate their experiences to help the researcher achieve his goal. The documentary analysis triangulates the findings from the interviews and focus group discussion. Four ACET centres were selected as sites for the study. A pilot study was conducted to try out the research questions to be used. This contributed to the reliability and credibility of the data collected, and ultimately, the findings. Ethics issues were considered by the researcher to ensure respect for participants' rights and for the success of the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the study was to explore the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction. The foregoing chapter discussed the research design and methodology employed by the researcher in undertaking the research. The present chapter is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the data. The presentation of the research data sought to address the research questions stated in Chapter 1. The questions are repeated here to ease the presentation and analysis of the data;

- ❖ How can adult and community education and training contribute to the empowerment of rural women?
- ❖ What is the role of adult and community education and training in rural women's skills development?
- ❖ How have adult and community education and training contributed to rural women's economic development?
- ❖ To what extent can adult and community education and training assist in poverty reduction among rural women?

The above-mentioned research questions were used to collect data for the study and then were analysed by the researcher. According to Delgado et al. (2009:14), data analysis involves the process of describing the data collected and making interpretations about them. In other words, it involves bringing together the data collected, e.g. assumptions, theories, general knowledge, and then goes on to draw conclusions which go beyond what the data presents (Nichols et al., 2013). The purpose of data analysis in this study was to inductively identify the main themes or categories (Bouchet et al., 2011:86) that addressed the research questions and objectives. Before having embarked on this research, the researcher conducted interviews which were audio-

recorded whilst site notes were made. Baxter and Jack (2008:554) affirm that qualitative data analysis takes place alongside data collection. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed into text and verbatim statements from the participants. These were analysed based on the categories and themes developed during the interviews. The transcribed text gave the researcher the opportunity to read and re-read the typed responses and make sense of them through interpretation of data collected.

DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2011:138; 150) point out that the move from coding to the interpretation of data is also an essential component of data analysis. Therefore, the data must be carefully coded and consistent, analysed and interpreted based on the research questions and objectives to make the study significant. In other words, data must be carefully analysed with the aim to reduce bias and draw conclusions that are factual. To ensure this, the researcher used open coding to ensure that the themes are grouped into similarities and differences and carefully interpreted to arrive at the findings. Implementing these steps helped the researcher to slowly narrow down the focus of the study.

The researcher's data analysis procedure is summarised below.

- ❖ The researcher recorded the interviews and took field notes. He expanded the notes to convey meaning (Nichols et al., 2013:350-357);
- ❖ The field notes taken were used after the interviews to help make sense of the data collected;
- ❖ The recorded interviews were transcribed, codes were given and analyses were done based on the themes and categories developed during the interviews (Bouchet et al., 2011:86);
- ❖ He interpreted the data based on the research questions and stated objectives; and
- ❖ Common themes were found and stated from the interpretation, and then expanded upon.

#### **4.1.1 Method used for the data analysis**

The analytical method used for the data analysis constitutes inductive thematic analysis. This method was used by the researcher because its narrative characteristics reflect on reality and experiences of data collected. By using this method the researcher was able to identify themes and elaborated on them to bring an acceptable level of understanding. Guest et al. (2012:15-16) describe this method of analysis as:

“a rigorous, inductive, set of procedures designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible. Its methods are drawn from a broad range of several theoretical and methodological perspectives, but in the end, its primary concern is with presenting the stories and experiences voiced by the study participants as accurately and comprehensively as possible.”

In line with the principle above, the researcher read through the data thoroughly and then described and coded certain segments from the data into appropriate themes to make the interpretation and analysis logical and manageable. The researcher did not deviate from or present false information from the data collected, but presented factual information as perceived by him and experienced by the participants.

#### **4.2 ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS**

In this section, the researcher presented the findings after examining documents such as the ACET and Post-school policy documents, ACET registers, admission records, as well as educators' and learners' profile documents. For the sake of sound ethics, the researcher sought permission from relevant authorities such as the centre managers of adult learning centres to access these documents. The findings in this section are presented below:

## **4.2.1 Demographic profiling of research participants**

### **4.2.1.1 Learners interviewed**

Four centres were selected as the study's research sites with five adult learners having been selected from each centre. All the participants were level-4 ACET learners, unemployed and with an average of two children. The participants' ages ranged between 19 – 40 years. The majority of the participants (n=16) are single parents, with one being a widow and two divorced. The biographical information retrieved indicates that both the youth and adult citizens of the country require knowledge and skills for socio-economic freedom as the majority of them have bigger families (n=5) to care for, with this being the possible reason why these individuals enrol in ACET programmes. Since the participants are unemployed, they lack the financial means to transport themselves to the learning centres; a factor that may cause them to lose interest in the ACET programme or drop out of their training. The interview findings discussed in this study affirmed that the majority of the women do not see themselves benefitting from ACET programmes because of the poor training they received or are receiving at the learning centres.

### **4.2.1.2 Former ACET learners interviewed**

Seven former ACET learners were selected for face to face interviews. Their ages ranged between 23 and 38 years with the majority of them having remained unemployed after completing their studies. The majority of them (n=5) are single parents who are responsible for the welfare of three children on average, yet they are unemployed. Only one of these former learners seems to have some form of employment although it is of a low quality (i.e. kitchen assistant). Additionally, one of these learners has gone on to further studies and one can speculate that she might have realised that it is only when she upgrades her certificate that she can be gainfully employed to satisfy her economic needs. Indeed, the learner has set a good example

by realising that the best way to get employed is to be even more skilled and knowledgeable.

#### **4.2.1.3 Focus group discussion with adult learners**

Four learners were selected for a focus group discussion. These individuals were selected from four different Community Learning Centres (CLCs), with all being level-4 ACET learners. Their ages ranged between 22 and 35 years and one of the four reported being married with three children. The rest are single parents and have families to provide for despite the fact that they are all unemployed. The information above indicates that these participants probably have serious financial problems and as a result, continue to live in poverty. Educating rural women through the provision of ACET becomes an important tool for poverty reduction, which is why ACET programmes should be restructured to meet the women's learning needs.

#### **4.2.1.4 Interviews with ACET educators**

Four educators were selected for face to face interviews, with their years of teaching experience ranging between 4 and 11 years. Three educators are in possession of a Diploma in Education and the other has a Marketing (N6) certificate and a National Professional Diploma of Education (NPDE). None of them have any special skills to train learners to engage in livelihood activities. This information gives a clear picture of the fact that they are professionally qualified to teach in ACET centres, but not at level four of the ACET programmes. This is because level-4 ACET deals with skills training and they do not have knowledge of any practical skills. This can be one of the reasons why skills training programmes are lacking when it comes to the women's education.

#### **4.2.2 ACET centre curricula**

The findings from the documentary analysis revealed that the curriculum of the ACET centres comprised the following:



- ❖ English (LLC2)
- ❖ Xhosa (LLC1)
- ❖ Mathematical Literacy
- ❖ Life Orientation
- ❖ Early Childhood Development
- ❖ Ancillary

The above-mentioned curriculum suggests that unless the authorities transform the ACET curriculum, many rural women who enrol for ACET programme will never acquire the practical job skills they need for survival. Skills training is required if rural women are to realise their learning goals, which is to gain sustainable employment or to become self-employed, with this self-employment possibly minimising abuse from partners and reducing poverty. Citing McKay (2006), Quan-Baffour (2011:95) affirms that the knowledge and skills that adult learners acquire from their training must be used to re-think their living conditions. To achieve this goal, therefore, the curriculum of rural women should include but not be limited to the following:

- ❖ Agricultural studies (consisting of crop and animal farming);
- ❖ Fashion design;
- ❖ Catering;
- ❖ Sewing;
- ❖ Carpentry;
- ❖ Electrical skills;
- ❖ Painting;
- ❖ Auto-mechanics;
- ❖ Arts and crafts; and
- ❖ Ceramics/pottery.

Indeed, training in skills such as the ones mentioned above may lead to poverty reduction among rural women in that the acquisition of these skills will allow the women to engage in self-employment activities to improve their socio-economic conditions.

These practical life skills that the women require in their training are to enable them to become productive and conduct their income-generating projects and businesses. The skills acquired can also help the women to become financially independent rather than depend on others for their survival to improve their socio-economic conditions.

#### **4.3 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS FROM INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

The aim of this study, as stated in Chapter 1, is to explore the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction. To arrive at this aim the researcher used semi-structured in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis as data collection techniques. Interviews were conducted with 35 participants who were purposively selected from a population of 400 individuals. The 35 participants included 20 learners, seven (7) former ACET learners, four (4) educators and a focus group consisting of four (4) learners. The research assistant helped translate all the data collected in Isixhosa into English which was then used in the data presentation and analysis. The data collected from the various participant groups were manually analysed under various themes. The themes were formulated on the basis of the research questions below:

- ❖ How can ACET contribute to the empowerment of rural women?
- ❖ What is the role of ACET in rural women's skills development?
- ❖ How can ACET contribute to rural women's economic development?
- ❖ To what extent can ACET assist in poverty reduction among rural women?

The findings were derived from participant response to the research questions and are presented and analysed under the themes discussed in the next section.

##### **4.3.1 Contributions of ACET to the empowerment of rural women**

The fact that the majority of rural women are jobless in their respective communities makes it difficult for them to satisfy their daily and basic needs. Therefore, it is important

that they are empowered with skills for livelihood activities. Some rural women have enrolled in ACET programmes so that they can be empowered to lead better and productive lives and when asked about how ACET has contributed to their empowerment, they gave different responses. For example, one of them responded by saying:

*I am involved in the programme which is helping me to acquire basic skill in early childhood development so that I can open my own day care centre which can enable me to earn some income. When I am able to do that I can live a better life.*

This response suggests that ACET is empowering women with basic skills in Early Childhood Development so that they can engage in livelihood activities such as running a day-care centre to generate income from the services they provide, meaning that they are better able to take care of themselves and their families.

Another participant voiced the following:

*I am involved in academic programmes of ACET. We are learning subjects like basic Math, Isixhosa, English and Life Orientation. My aim is to further my studies after studying here at this centre.*

The above response indicates that some of the women hope to further their studies after completing their ACET programmes, meaning that the ACET programmes must be streamlined to their needs in order to bring value to the women's lives since it is their goal to further their studies.

Yet again, another participant said that:

*I am involved in the programme of ACET and after my studies; I am going to get a certificate with which to use to secure a job.*

The above response indicates that ACET has empowered some of the women by providing them with certificates at the end of their training, with which they can apply for job opportunities. In summary, the responses above suggest that the women see ACET as a means of empowerment to enable them to satisfy their socio-economic needs. The programme can lead to job opportunities or to further study.

Another contribution that ACET has to offer rural women is to equip them with business-oriented skills. When asked about how ACET has contributed to their empowerment in this regard, a participant responded as follows;

*We are empowered with knowledge on how to access information for business practices. We study this skill in the subject Business Studies.*

Indeed, some of the women have benefitted from the subjects they are learning, e.g. business studies. The skill acquired in this subject can assist them to engage in business practices for economic survival. Rural women require this form of knowledge and training to participate in economic activities and to live fulfilling lives.

On the other hand, there are those who think that their involvement in the ACET programme has not assisted them to achieve their goals. A participant expressed her feelings in this way:

*I am a learner in the ACET programme. I am studying subjects such as Life Orientation, English, Xhosa, Ancillary, ECD, and Math Literacy. I do not think the programme is empowering me with the skills I really need.*

The response above indicates that the courses and training received at the centres are not appropriate for some of the women involved in the programme. The dissatisfaction of this participant requires that the courses and training be streamlined to meet the needs of all who are involved in it.

Although ACET aims to create opportunities for rural women who are disadvantaged, some others lack access to this education provision. The participant responses bring to light some of the difficulties that rural women face; difficulties which prevent them from accessing ACET programmes. The following constitute a few examples:

*As I am still a young person I depend on my mother to give me money for transportation to attend classes. Since she is not working I find it difficult to attend classes regularly.*

Another participant also said:

*I do not attend class every day and as a result, I do miss some of my lessons. The reason is that I am not financially able to pay for my transport fares and I am not working.*

This factor was also mentioned by another participant:

*The problem that restricts me from attending classes regularly is hunger. Sometimes I do not have money to buy food to sustain me. As a result, I lose concentration in class because I am hungry. I really do not like to attend classes because of this problem.*

From the above responses, it can be inferred that the major problem that the women face is a lack of financial support for their education and their well-being. Some of them depend solely on their families for financial support for their education. There are also those who are financially responsible for themselves but who are jobless. These mentioned factors preventing women from accessing ACET programmes make it obvious that many of them will either drop out or remain at home without gaining any education or training.

Another problem perceived by the women is that the ACET centres are located geographically far away from them, this making it difficult for them to attend classes. A participant affirmed this by saying that:

*My colleagues find it difficult to attend ACET classes because they travel long distances to the centres. Some of them attend classes only once a month because of the distance and this is not good for their training.*

This participant response reveals that most of the women travel long distances to get to the learning centres. Consequently it is important that ACET centres are strategically situated for all to have equal access to them and their empowerment programmes.

When the women were asked about how they and other members of their communities are being empowered by the centres, it was revealed by the participants that they were not being empowered in any way and in fact drew very little benefit from their involvement in the ACET programmes. One participant lamented this by saying:

*There are no empowerment programmes such as leather works, sewing or plumbing that we receive at the centre. We are only increasing our knowledge of the subjects we are learning at the centre to receive a certificate at the end of our studies.*

The response above indicates that the women are interested in programmes that can empower them in skills training such as basket weaving, arts and crafts, fashion design, catering and others. However, they are only being taught some subjects with the hope of receiving a certificate at the end of their studies to use in applying for jobs. There are those who believe that these certificates are not valuable enough to help them get their desired jobs. In fact, getting the desired job with a level-4 ACET certificate is very difficult; a fact confirmed by the following quote:

*We are provided certificates to apply for jobs at the end of our studies, however, securing a job is difficult because the certificates provided at the end of our studies is just an ACET level 4 certificate which has low value for the job market.*

The response reveals that the women require more rigorous skills training programmes that can empower them to be better placed for jobs requiring specific skills.

In view of the need to satisfy the desires of women involved in ACET programmes and the inappropriateness of the training that they receive, it is important that they are involved in designing their own curricula or programmes of learning. This is because they (i.e. the rural women) are the ones experiencing the problems mentioned, and they are thus best placed to know how to solve them. One important way of solving their problems is for them to be included when it comes to curriculum design. When they were asked about how they can be involved in designing their curricula or programmes, some of the participants shared their views in this way:

*If we can have a forum where learners are involved in designing the curriculum then we can be able to share our views on the issues concerning the curriculum or programmes which can benefit us. But we are not included when the curriculum is designed for us.*

Another participant also said:

*When the educators come to our communities to explain to us and register us for the programmes, they must also tell us what the curriculum entails. This can allow us to also contribute our views about the curriculum and what we really want to study.*

One of the educators interviewed on the above-mentioned subject also mentioned that partnerships between community councillors and the ACET centres can go a long way in bridging this gap. What they can do, as suggested by the educator, is:

*Community councillors and the ACET centres must work together to convey meetings which can allow the women to share their ideas on the curriculum or programmes.*

If we are to see women owning and assuming responsibility for their own empowerment progress, then these suggestions are to be taken seriously. This can ensure that their needs – skills training for poverty reduction of rural women - are realised.

#### **4.3.2 The role of ACET in the skills development of rural women**

The role of ACET is to empower rural women with skills for livelihood. Empowering rural women through skills training is a good strategy to liberate them from the socio-economic oppression. The provision of ACET programmes seeks to address the lack of skills among rural women in disadvantaged communities. However, the present study has revealed that not all the learners are satisfied with the programmes offered by ACET. As a result, ACET has failed in its role to develop rural women with livelihood skills. For example, when asked about the skills programmes that the centre is offering, some participants seemed disappointed. Herewith some of their responses:

*I am not involved in any skills training programme. The only thing I do is to study the following subjects: Life Orientation, English, ECD and Mathematical Literacy. The worse part of it is that we do not have educators to teach other subjects.*

Another participant had this to say:

*We are not offered any skills-building programmes. At the moment we are just studying and doing investigations and project work for the subjects we are studying at the centre.*

Yet again, another participant simply remarked:

*We are not having any skills training, only learning other subjects.*



The above-mentioned participant responses clearly reveal that not all of the participants are happy with the ACET curriculum. The unemployed rural women want to learn practical skills to enhance their livelihoods and without these livelihood skills they might not achieve their learning goals, which can lead to dropout among the learners. To be able to attend to the learning desires of the women, ACET programme planners should conduct needs analyses to enable them include in the curriculum what the participants love to learn.

In order to triangulate the findings from the learners, the same set of questions was presented to the educators selected from the four different centres. When asked about the skills-building programmes they offer their learners, their responses confirmed the learner responses. One educator came out clearly to say that:

*We are not providing skills training at our centre because we the educators do not have special skills that we can teach our learners. This makes it difficult to include skills training in our programmes, although this level requires that we teach them skills like tailoring, shoemaking, plumbing and other skills like these.*

The above response confirms that the current ACET programme does not fulfil the learners' training desires. Therefore, it is crucial for the programme organisers to employ qualified, skilled educators to offer learners practical skills with which to enhance self-employment initiatives. One educator reported on some of the challenges to skills training by saying:

*We do not have our own centres. We are using the classrooms for the school children. So where do we keep our teaching and learning materials if we introduce a skills programme like plumbing? Who will provide us with all the plumbing materials since I cannot afford these materials and the centres do not have funding to support us?*

These rhetorical questions reveal the dilemma in which the educators find themselves. It is important that ACET centres are well-resourced and established in a well-demarcated environment. This can raise the reputation of ACET so as to retain and attract more learners. As it is, the learners are dissatisfied with their learning space. One of the participants mentioned and affirmed this by saying:

*Our learning centre is at the place of work of some people and not a real school. For example, we are using a small room at the Public Works Department and this makes me uncomfortable when I attend classes. As a result, I do not like to attend and participate in the ACET programmes.*

Indeed, as indicated above, both learners and educators are of the view that the infrastructure of the ACET institution needs to be restructured in such a way as to create a suitable learning environment, to avoid intimidation by people who currently work on the premises used.

#### **4.3.3 Contributions of ACET to the economic development of rural women**

ACET has the potential to bring about development in the socio-economic lives of rural women, hence its provision in the rural communities where many disadvantaged women live. The majority of the women who join ACET programmes have a similar goal, i.e. finding employment to earn a living or to be involved in activities that can help generate income. Some of the participants in this study expressed their goals for attending ACET classes as follows:

*The programme can help me to acquire a certificate at the end of my studies and use it to find a job, earn a salary to take care of my children by providing food, clothes, buy electricity and send them to school.*

Another participant had this to say;

*When I complete my studies, I will be given a certificate which I can use to find a job. But I must confess securing a job is very difficult to come by with just this certificate. Some of my friends who have completed the programmes are still sitting at home doing nothing at all. It seems attending classes is a futile exercise.*

A third participant also said;

*I hope that the training I receive from ACET can help me to get a job to support my family by putting food on the table. However, I am still depending on government from the grant we receive so that we can survive.*

Any person who enrolls for a course of study has an objective in mind. The responses above indicate that the participants on ACET programmes joined the classes to acquire employment skills in order to be employed. Some of the women also joined ACET programmes so that they can be equipped with self-employment skills for their own economic development. ACET has contributed to the economic development of some of the women by equipping them with basic skills in Early Childhood Development (ECD). One participant said:

*The training which we receive from the programme of ACET, for example, in ECD, we are given training on how to take care of babies and children. From this training we can open our own daycare centres to earn some income to take care of our own families.*

The response above indicates that the women desire to become equipped with practical skills for self-employment. With these practical skills they can engage in business practices to generate revenue with which to care for themselves and their families.

Another important practical skill that rural women are keen to acquire from their involvement in ACET constitutes computer skills. This skill is important for rural dwellers, women in particular, in order to have access to job opportunities in the contemporary world. Progress in business-oriented practices and access to information require that rural women are trained in the use of computers and its accessories. One of the participants revealed this need by indicating that computer studies should be introduced into their curriculum to capacitate them for the world of work:

*I am interested in computer training because this skill is very important nowadays. Whenever you apply for a job, computer training is required and it can help your business to do well. It must be introduced in the curriculum of our training programme.*

The response above thus suggests that ACET programmes should be restructured to include computer skills to gratify the needs of these women.

Despite the contributions made by ACET to the economic development of rural women, there are some adult learners who have realised that the ACET certificate is not sufficient to get them employment in that many who have acquired the ACET certificate remain unemployed. What this implies is that the participants in ACET programmes should learn more practical skills to create their own jobs instead of waiting for scarce employment opportunities. As one learner rightly mentioned:

*I completed my studies from ACET three years ago and I have been looking for a job since then with my ACET certificate. I do not meet the requirements of most of the jobs advertised. As a result, I have even given up hope totally in my search for work.*

From this response it can be deduced that some ACET learners thought they would be employed easily with an ACET certificate. It is about time that both learners and

educators reflected on the curriculum to add more job-oriented subjects to avoid frustration.

Another challenge perceived by the learners is that opening a day-care centre can have financial implications. Nonetheless, one can use a house, church or a community hall to start a day-care centre. Those who always think that one needs a lot of money limit themselves through their thinking. One woman thought that:

*Opening a day-care centre requires a lot of money. You have to build or rent your own site to set up the centre. It is also expensive to buy all the things the children might need. Since I do not have a job it will be difficult to set up my own day-care centre.*

As can be seen from this quote, such thinking can leave many rural women jobless and trapped in a dependency syndrome. To help rural women succeed in their economic lives they are to be encouraged timeously to devise their own means and to use the resources available to engage in livelihood activities.

To develop rural women economically they must be trained in livelihood skills. This study, however, revealed that the learners are not being trained in practical skills for livelihood purposes. The reason is that the educators at the ACET centres do not possess the necessary skills to impart such knowledge to learners. As a result, the lives of the women are not improved economically. Some participants expressed their feelings about the factors that hinder their economic development during the interviews. Here are some of their responses:

*The main problem I have is with the educators. Almost all of them do not have any skill to train us. That is why we are just learning the subjects and not the skills that we require to engage in livelihood activities. If the government can provide us with qualified skilled educators, I think we can improve our economic conditions.*

Another participant said:

*At our learning centre, there are no skill training programmes which we learn, hence it can be difficult for us to acquire skills to improve our living conditions. This is what hinders our economic progress in life.*

The responses above indicate that the majority of rural women lack practical livelihood skills because of the poor training they receive from the ACET programmes. The failure of the women who attend ACET classes to develop economically is the result of a lack of skilled educators. What this suggests is that the organisers of ACET should employ skilled and qualified educators to teach in the ACET centres. In ensuring this the women will be provided with the correct training for them to be economically productive.

#### **4.3.4 The role of ACET in poverty reduction among rural women**

The poverty experienced by women is a major problem in most rural communities. The researcher sought to investigate the role of ACET in poverty reduction among rural women, presenting questions to the participants about how they felt ACET programmes have helped women in their communities to reduce poverty. The participant responses indicated that ACET has not helped the women to reduce poverty. Most of the women, therefore, live in poverty because of a lack of employment. This revelation was affirmed by one of the participants when she said:

*The majority of the women in the community are living in poverty. They are unable to provide nutritious meals for themselves and their children. This is because they are unemployed and depending only on the child support grant they receive from the government.*

The response above indicates that poverty is a major problem that rural women are facing in life. To help them out of poverty, they must be appropriately skilled and educated to have access to jobs or to be able to engage in self-employment activities

such as bead making, basket weaving, fashion design and carpentry. ACET organisers should ensure that they provide programmes that are relevant for the up-skilling of rural women so that they can be financially independent to supplement the support they receive from the government.

Indeed, poverty among rural women is a result of lacking education, skills training and unemployment. One of the participants illustrated it as follows:

*Most of the women in my community do not have any jobs. There are some who did not go to school and others too could not even complete their studies. As a result the majority of the women are unskilled and live in poverty.*

The above response suggests that most rural women and their families are deeply affected by poverty because they are practically unemployable. One participant aptly described the poverty of the women:

*Poverty affects us in such a way that many of us are not able to pay our hospital bills. Even going to the hospitals from the villages is very difficult since we do not have money to pay for transport fares when we are transferred to the main hospital in town. We only depend on the grant we receive from government and this is too little to last for a month.*

The view above is supported by another participant:

*We are affected by poverty in such a way that we are unable to even provide the basic necessities in life like nutritious food, clothing, good water to drink and adequate housing for ourselves and children. As a result, some of us are looked down upon by our friends in the community.*

The responses above indicate that rural women have a very serious problem to deal with, making it crucial for them to be assisted in reducing or eradicating poverty. The

providers of ACET have a crucial role to play in the lives of rural women by providing them with appropriate skills programmes for survival. Without livelihood skills rural women will continue to live in perpetual poverty. A participant, therefore, suggested that:

*The government should open up doors for new opportunities in the lives of women by providing programmes that can be relevant to their needs such as brick-laying, fashion design, catering, basket weaving, computer skills, arts and crafts and other important skills.*

The quotes above reveal that this form of skills training is lacking in the education of rural women. There is a need for ACET programmes to be restructured to open up opportunities for the majority of rural women who require skills training for livelihood in the quest to reduce poverty.

#### **4.4 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION RESULTS**

This section presents the data from the focus group discussion. The focus group discussed the same items that had been put to the interviewees and the researcher could thus compare the different set of responses to each other.

##### **4.4.1 Contributions of ACET to the empowerment of rural women**

The researcher sought to ascertain the extent to which ACET has empowered rural women in their communities. When this question was presented to the four members in the focus group, some of the women mentioned how ACET has indeed empowered them. Here are some examples:

*Some of the women who have completed their studies are working in day care centres. There are others who are working as kitchen assistants.*



Another member of the focus group also said:

*At the centres we are empowered by learning subjects like Maths Literacy, English, Life Skills and basic skills in Early Childhood Development.*

The responses above indicate that some of the women are benefitting from ACET programmes, but that the kinds of work that these women are involved in seems to be of low quality and incapable of satisfying their needs.

On the other hand, some of the women mentioned that the theoretical lessons they receive from ACET had indeed benefitted them. For example, the lessons they receive in English have helped them to communicate with their peers and others about ACET programmes. One member of the focus group said;

*The ACET programme is empowering me to learn how to communicate with my peers and others by studying English. I am also able to share information about ACET programmes with other women in the community.*

The response above indicates that some of the women believe that proficiency in English is good for their development. With proficiency in English they are able to share information about ACET programmes and its benefits to their peers. The theoretical lessons that the women receive, however, must be in addition to practical training for a sustainable livelihood. This is because most of the women lack practical skills which can empower them for survival.

In spite of the contributions made by ACET to the empowerment of rural women, there are some who feel that they have not benefitted from ACET. A member of the focus group expressed her feelings in this way:

*We are not given any form of skills training that can empower us for survival. What we need for livelihood is practical skills like business skills to conduct our*

*own business; to be able to employ our friends; family members and others in the community.*

The above response indicates that without practical skills training rural women cannot be empowered sustainably. The onus rests on the organisers of ACET to provide relevant skills training programmes to empower rural women for livelihood. This is because many of the women are poorly trained and as a result can only get low quality jobs in their respective communities. One of the members in the focus group rightly said:

*Some of the women who have completed their studies are working in day-care centres and others as kitchen assistants. They are paid very little salaries. This is because they are not skilled enough to establish their own businesses which can attract more income than working for others.*

As indicated above, the women require the practical skills needed to become self-employed for sustainable socio-economic development.

There were also certain challenges that the women mentioned that prevented them from benefitting from the ACET programmes. When they were asked about what hinders them from attending and benefitting from ACET, they gave different responses. For example, a member of the focus group indicated that they do not know about ACET and as a result only a few women attend the ACET programme:

*We do not know about the ACET programme until the educators come to our communities to look for individuals who want to participate in ACET programmes.*

This indicates that the ACET programmes are not well-promoted or advertised to attract participants. ACET organisers must properly advertise ACET programmes and emphasise it as a means to empower rural women for socio-economic advancement.

However, the few who knew about the programmes mentioned that they cannot attend because the ACET centres are situated a great distance from them:

*I am staying very far away from where the centre is located. If it were to be close, I would not have any financial problems to transport myself to the centre.*

This response above reveals that ACET centres should be established at strategic places so that the majority of the women can have easy access to them.

Another area of study which poses a challenge to the women is the study of English, where the educators themselves cannot express themselves in the language. One member of the focus group affirmed this by saying that:

*We have a problem with the English Language since most of the educators do not express themselves well in English. As a result, they are unable to understand resources used in teaching and learning which are written in English. They find it very difficult teaching us in English as such, Isixhosa is mostly used as a medium of instruction.*

Another member of the group also mentioned that:

*The educators are teaching us using the local language. What is even more worrying is that they teach English using Isixhosa.*

The responses above suggest that the language difficulty in English is a challenge to most of the educators, with this having affected learner performance.

Another member of the group presented an additional problem by indicating that some of the subjects presented at the centres are not being taught because there are no educators to teach them. She described this in the following way:

*We do not have educators for some of our subjects and most of the educators do not have the necessary skills to teach us the skills that we need. For example, since the beginning of the year, we do not have an educator for the subject Ancillary.*

From the above, aside from the lack of educators to teach some subjects, most of them do not have the necessary skills to teach skills-related courses, but time allocation is also a problem:

*The timeframe allocated to teaching and learning activities is too small for us. We only have three hours for our studies each day and only four days in a week. This makes us not to cover the required syllabus and as such we are not well equipped.*

The response above reveals that the timeframe allocated to teaching and learning is too little considering the workload and the type of training required by the women.

The women also mentioned that certain social problems have prevented them from attending ACET classes. When they were asked about what prevented them from attaining education and training, a participant from the focus group mentioned that social issues presented a major problem. She expressed her feelings in this way:

*Some of us are being abused by our partners and from senior family members. Our husbands make us house wives, so we are not allowed to go anywhere but to stay at home to work in the garden, cook and to take care of the children.*

The above response suggests that ACET programmes and their benefits must be well explained to community members. This can be done through community forums where households can be enlightened about the benefits of joining the ACET programmes.

Another member of the group mentioned that aside from these social issues, there were some women who were lazy and wished to rely exclusively on the government for everything:

*Some women do not want to attend classes because they don't want to do anything for themselves. They always want the government to provide for them.*

The above responses suggest that ACET programmes and their value should be explained properly to the women in various communities so as to increase uptake.

#### **4.4.2 The role of ACET in the skills development of rural women**

ACET has a crucial role to play in developing rural women with skills for livelihood, which is why ACET has been established to cater for the disadvantaged individuals in impoverished communities. Many rural women have enrolled for ACET programmes with the aim to be equipped with livelihood skills. When the focus group was asked about the skills-building programmes they are involved in at the centres, one of the members, in agreement with the others, had this to say:

*We are not involved in any skills training programme, but we have been complaining that we want to learn sewing and other practical skills.*

This response suggests that skills training should form an important aspect of the training that the women receive at ACET centres. This response was corroborated with the response of one of the educators interviewed, who said:

*We do not have any skills training here at the centre because we the educators do not have the skills ourselves. What we need is workshops so that we can be empowered to assist these learners.*

This shows that most of the learners will either lack motivation to learn or, at worst, drop out of their training. The women are not given any skills training for livelihood, which makes it virtually impossible to find work or to engage in self-employment activities to improve their lives.

#### **4.4.3 Contributions of ACET to the economic development of rural women**

This section presents the data on how ACET programmes have contributed to the economic development of rural women. Rural women need to be developed economically through the provision of ACET, but it has failed to achieve its goal. One member of the focus group remarked as follows:

*Some of us are managing to survive with our families from the grant we receive from the government. As we have families to care for we need jobs that can help us earn salaries to buy food for our children every day.*

The above response revealed that the women's only means of survival is through the grant they receive from the government. Yet, this financial support that the women receive from the government does not maintain them sustainably.

When they were asked how ACET programmes can improve their living conditions, one of the women had the following to say:

*ACET can equip us with relevant skills to engage in economic activities for our development. But most of the women are not taking advantage of the programme. This is because we are not motivated to learn. We can be motivated if we are provided with the right skills training programmes rather than teaching us just literacy in Isixhosa and English.*

The response above indicates that economically developing rural women requires that they are equipped with skills. This seemed to be the most important thing that the women desire for their economic development. ACET organisers should restructure the

ACET programmes to meet the women's learning needs for socio-economic development.

#### **4.4.4 The role of ACET in poverty reduction among rural women**

The majority of rural women live in poverty. To help them escape this problem they need to be equipped with skills for livelihood. ACET is crucial for achieving this poverty reduction goal. Rural women, however, live in poverty because of a lack of skills to engage in income generating activities. Many of them cannot provide for themselves and their families the basic needs for day to day living. One member of the focus group affirmed this when saying:

*We are unable to provide for our children. The food we eat lacks important nutrients such as protein. It is not nutritious for the children. We cannot buy good food because we are poor and not working.*

The response above indicates that because rural women are unemployed and lack the financial means to provide for themselves and their families, they live in poverty. What this suggests is that ACET providers have a role to play in the lives of rural women by equipping them with skills for self-employment or for them to be employable. In this way the women can engage in productive activities to reduce poverty. Without this measure in place, most of them will remain poor and continue to live on the edge of survival.

When asked about what can be done to address the problem of women living in poverty, one participant from the group suggested that:

*The government should employ educators with skills to teach at ACET centres. The institution should be provided with funding to support projects and buy resources for the skills they are teaching.*

Another participant also suggested that:

*Graduates from ACET should be assisted financially in opening their own business or projects. This can help reduce poverty.*

The responses above show that serious measures are required if women are to be liberated from poverty. As new graduates from ACET may not have the financial strength to start their own projects, they must be assisted to achieve this goal. In turn, they will then be able to employ or involve other women in established projects with the aim of reducing poverty.

Indeed, poverty can hold serious implications for rural women and their families. When they (members of the group) were asked how poverty affects them and their families, one of them said:

*Because of poverty some of us have been abused and discriminated in the communities. We cannot even feed our children three times in a day with good food. As a result, we get malnourished. The children get sick all the time because they don't eat well.*

The response above helps us to see that poverty has devastating effects. It is only through education and training that rural women can escape from poverty.

#### **4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the findings from the in-depth interviews (individual and focus group) and documentary analysis. Face to face interviews were conducted with female learners and educators as the study was based on women in Mthatha, South Africa. The excerpts from the interviews were presented in English. The research assistant helped translate excerpts which were in IsiXhosa into English. The next chapter is devoted to the discussion of these findings.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter presented the findings from the data analyses. It included findings from the documentary analysis, individual interviews and focus group discussions. The present chapter discusses these findings and relates them to the literature review in Chapter 2. The discussion is presented under the following themes:

- ❖ Contributions of ACET to the empowerment of rural women;
- ❖ The role of ACET in the skills development of rural women;
- ❖ Contributions of ACET to the economic development of rural women; and
- ❖ The role of ACET in poverty reduction among rural women.

It is important to note that key issues from these themes, such as empowerment, skills development, economic development and poverty reduction are interrelated and cannot be separated from each other. However, the researcher tried to limit and place emphasis on specific theme stated throughout the discussion.

#### **5.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACET TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN**

Education is the best means for empowering the marginalised, the poor and the uneducated in the contemporary world. ACET, in particular, is an important tool for the empowerment of rural women in that it grants them basic knowledge and skills for them to live fulfilling lives. The study revealed that the women enrolled for ACET programmes have the aspiration that ACET can contribute to their lives by empowering them with knowledge and livelihood skills so that they are able to take care of themselves and their families economically. This revelation is affirmed by Sonja (2011:67) that empowering rural women grants them freedom from social and economic enslavement and shapes their lives for better living conditions. To this end, the researcher defines

empowerment as a means of equipping or providing educationally underprivileged individuals, rural women in particular, with basic knowledge and skills for them to engage in livelihood activities for the socio-economic transformation of their lives.

Citing Galbraith (1983), Lord and Hutchison (2009:2) contend that empowerment is similar to power, which is the “capacity of persons or organisations to produce intended, foreseen and unforeseen effects on others.” The institution of Adult Education, ACET in particular, has the capacity to impact positively on the lives of rural women who require education and skills training for access to economic opportunities in life. For this reason, the majority of rural women have enrolled in ACET programmes, suggesting that the ACET programmes provided meet the rural women’s learning needs. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013b:1) aimed for ACET programmes to bridge the skills and knowledge gap among rural women. The programmes, therefore, must be linked to public works programmes which can provide the much-needed knowledge and skills training to empower rural women in the country. Hence, the study sought to find out how ACET has contributed to the empowerment of rural women.

The study revealed from the interviews conducted with participants that some of the women are not benefitting fully from the programmes offered at the ACET satellite centres because the programmes are not in fact equipping them with practical or job-related skills. This problem is, in fact, the same flaw that has been identified with previous adult education programmes like ABET and AET (Baatjes & Baatjes, 2008:17-18). This researcher is of the view that for rural women to attain success in life they are to be empowered by equipping them with practical knowledge and skills to transform their socio-economic lives. Hence, the providers of adult education programmes should ensure that the women are empowered with relevant practical livelihood skills. According to Kabeer (2011:499-500), the empowerment of rural women should seek to transform their social, economic and personal experiences and enable them to take complete responsibility for the change they desire in their lives. Cornwall (2016:342-344) affirms that empowerment involves pathways to increase the prospects of people, particularly women to seize and increase control of their own lives. Indeed, rural women

especially, require skills training and education which can empower them to have complete control over their socio-economic lives, which is why ACET programmes that aim to empower rural women should be relevant to their empowerment needs. Some rural women might drop out of ACET programmes when they feel their learning needs are not being met. By providing the right programmes for these educationally deprived individuals, they will be in a better position to engage in economic activities to cater for the needs of their families and themselves.

According to Mandal (2013:19-20), empowering rural women by giving them access and opportunities to education (e.g. through ACET) can help them to enjoy equal rights, equal status, self-development and freedom from poverty. Therefore, rural women should be given the capacity and the ability to be able to contribute to their own development and that of their communities, which is why ACET is an important tool for the development of rural women in contemporary South Africa. ACET provision has the potential to help them to engage in entrepreneurial activities to improve their status, families and community well-being (Jamali, 2009:232; Scott et al., 2012:543-568). The researcher, therefore, investigated whether ACET has contributed to the development of rural women.

The findings from the focus group discussion corroborated those from the interviews and thus, revealed that the majority of rural women lack access to ACET programmes which hinders their acquisition of job skills. This is because they are unemployed and do not have the financial means to transport themselves to ACET centres to attend classes. Furthermore, there are those who depend on their families for financial support because they are unemployed. These problems, among others, could be the cause of them dropping out of their studies. It is these conditions that have impacted negatively on the socio-economic development of the majority of rural women. As a result, many of them are unable to compete with their male counterparts in the labour market. According to Kaur and Singh (2017:20), the majority of rural women still lack access to finance, training and rights because of a lack of basic education and skills. Beaman et al. (2018:1) affirm that due to a lack of education and skills, most women, especially

rural dwellers, remain marginalised as seen in the fact that they earn less than their male partners in the workplace. It is important that women are given access and opportunities to adult education to empower them to seek fairness in economic participation.

To achieve socio-economic emancipation, rural women are to be educated and skilled. The study revealed that the women desired empowerment programmes such as basket weaving, arts and crafts, fashion design, bricklaying and plumbing; programmes that can furnish them with necessary skills to lead a better life through economic participation. The findings from the documentary analysis based on ACET and Post-school policy documents revealed some of the programmes that can help rural women to become economically active. These include the following:

- ❖ Early childhood development;
- ❖ Community development work;
- ❖ Worker education;
- ❖ Cooperative and entrepreneurship education and training;
- ❖ Plumbing, construction, carpentry, electricity, welding and auto body repair;
- ❖ Motor mechanics;
- ❖ Home-based care;
- ❖ Parenting and childcare;
- ❖ Civic education, community mobilisation and organisation;
- ❖ Expanded public works programmes;
- ❖ Community health work programmes (including HIV/AIDS education);
- ❖ Information and communication technology; and
- ❖ Arts and crafts (DHET, 2017:18).

These programmes have the potential to empower rural women to engage in economic activities for socio-economic development. These economic activities may include access to sustainable employment, self-employment and engagement in livelihood activities. However, ACET centres are not teaching these courses prescribed by the

DHET because the majority of the centres' educators are not sufficiently skilled to teach these courses which involve practical skills. Biswas (2010:27) contends that empowering rural women economically is an important tool for poverty reduction or mitigation, meaning that they must be empowered with skills to enable them to access the economy. According to Duflo (2012:1070), giving rural women access to the economy includes access to property rights, bank loans, as well as access to employment and engagement in self-employment projects. The study revealed, however, that the current programmes offered at ACET satellite centres are not entirely relevant to the empowerment needs of the rural women involved in these ACET programmes. This researcher contends that it is important that rural women are empowered with basic knowledge and skills for economic survival. The views of the researcher is supported by Mandal (2013:20) who emphasises by saying that the empowerment of rural women with livelihood skills enables them to engage in social and economic activities for self-development, community development, as well as the development of the country as a whole.

In view of the above, it becomes necessary for rural women to be involved when designing their ACET curriculum. In that way they can select what they want to learn. The present study has revealed that to make ACET programmes more appropriate and relevant, the women are to be involved in designing their curricula or programmes of learning. Indeed, the findings from the focus group discussion confirmed the findings from interviews with ACET educators which indicate that this approach can be administered through learner forums and meetings where rural women should be allowed to share their ideas or views on the curriculum or the programmes of learning that can benefit them. By giving women a voice in developing their own training curriculum they can succeed in overcoming barriers related to gender, equity, poverty and unemployment. According to Griggs et al. (2013:307), the empowerment of rural women through the provision of adult education and skills training enables them to effectively deal with poverty, hunger and diseases for attaining sustainable and better living conditions. Indeed, rural women desire to live better lives, which is why they must be empowered through education and skills training.

### **5.3 THE ROLE OF ACET IN THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL WOMEN**

History has a way of leaving its mark on people; and this mark is often indelible. In South Africa, the Bantu Education system that came into force in 1953 left many black South Africans without the necessary skills to render them employable or self-employed in order to lead meaningful economic lives. According to McKay (2007:287), the main aim of the apartheid government was to disadvantage the black people, particularly rural women, so that they would only be good for working in white-owned factories and farms. To ensure that rural women would not become skilled, McKay (2007:287) emphasises that the Bantu Education Act of 1953 led to the establishment of a commission which proposed low-quality and separate education for black South Africans so that they would be prepared for subordination only. Citing Dlamini (1990), Tawiah and Quan-Baffour (2017:71) affirm that the blacks were only trained to become “hewers of wood and drawers of water.” Johnson and Quan-Baffour (2016:1) add that the system of education that existed in the past left many black South African rural women and their families living on the edge of survival because of their lacking livelihood skills. It is this form of training that many black people, especially rural women, received in the past which has contributed to the lack of skills for livelihood among the majority of them today. The researcher has observed how the majority of rural women in the study area have been marginalised, unemployed and now live in poverty due to a lack of skills training. The situations in which rural women find themselves require that they are given access to opportunities through basic education and training.

Skill training is a vital tool for the development of rural women so that they are able to participate in activities which can assist them to develop their economic lives and take care of their families. Without skills training the majority of them may continue to be marginalised, unemployed and live in perpetual poverty. To help rural women address these pressing social issues, they must be equipped with relevant skills. ACET in particular has an essential role to play in the lives of rural women by providing appropriate skills training programmes which can empower them to engage in livelihood

activities. This is why many rural women have enrolled in ACET programmes to be equipped with skills to improve their socio-economic lives. The study, therefore, sought to ascertain whether ACET is performing its role in the skills development of rural women.

The study has revealed, however, that the women involved in the ACET programmes at satellite community learning centres (CLCs) are not being trained in livelihood skills but are merely taught subjects like Life Orientation, English and Mathematical Literacy, all of which fail to equip them with the practical skills necessary for employment. Although the ACET programmes established in community colleges which have been piloted in the nine South African provinces are relevant to the needs of rural women (DHET, 2013:1; 2017:18), the majority of the satellite CLCs in the study area are ignored or neglected because of a lack of qualified educators. Findings from the documentary analysis revealed that the educators at the CLCs were not qualified or equipped with skills to teach their learners practical livelihood skills. Hence, the programmes offered at these centres are not relevant to the needs of the women, which suggest that until the right programmes are implemented at the piloted community colleges, rural women will continue to lack skills for employment and consequently will continue to live in poverty. According to McKay (2007:285-286), the denial of basic education and skills to rural women has led to the current situation where millions of adults, women in particular, are without the necessary skills for survival in the country. Quan-Baffour (2012:91) contends that by providing the poor, especially rural women, with skills training, they can be empowered to survive in the modern economy. Therefore, it is important that rural women are given access to relevant skills training programmes for them to be able to gain access to employment for poverty alleviation.

As emphasised the study revealed that the women in this study are not involved in skills training programmes because the educators do not have specific skills to teach learners in the satellite CLCs. This makes it difficult for practical skills training to be included in their learning programmes. This condition contributes to the lack of skills in rural areas, making women unemployable on account of lacking skills. Mayer et al. (2011:7) affirm

that despite the efforts made to educate women and equip them with skills needed for the workplace, many of them remain unemployed because they are not being trained appropriately. The researcher believes that giving rural women access and opportunities to jobs by equipping them with appropriate skills, they will have the capacity to free themselves from persistent communal issues such as unemployment, poverty, marginalisation, dejection and low self-esteem.

Another important revelation of the study from the interviews conducted was that besides the educators' lack of knowledge and relevant skills to equip learners with skills there is the problem of insufficient teaching and learning resources. Furthermore, there is a lack of adequate storage facilities and financial means to provide teaching and learning materials. These findings corroborate the views of Romm and Dichaba (2015:235), who argue that there is a lack of support for programmes which aim to up-skill and empower rural women to improve their living conditions. One of the educators affirmed this by saying:

“We do not have our own community learning centres. We are using the classrooms for the school children. So where do we keep our teaching and learning materials if we introduce a skills training programme like plumbing? Who will provide us with all the plumbing materials since we cannot afford these materials and the centres do not have a school fund to support us?”

The quote above illustrates a very difficult situation for both educators and learners involved in ACET programmes. Therefore, it is important that ACET programmes are provided within the boundary walls of their own institutions and are established in a well-resourced environment. According to DHET (2013; 2017), community colleges have been established in the nine provinces of the country to cater for these problems, but the majority of the satellite CLCs, especially in the study area, are neglected and continue to offer inappropriate programmes. If we are to succeed in the war against a lack of skills, unemployment and poverty in South Africa, then this situation prevailing at the CLCs must be attended to immediately by providing relevant skills learning



programmes for learners in these centres. Quan-Baffour (2015:26) supports this statement by adding that skills' training is the best tool for enabling rural women to fight poverty and to help them engage in livelihood activities for socio-economic freedom.

The institution of ACET has a key role to play in the lives of rural women. This important role calls for a critical reflection on the lives of rural women and the providers of adult education in the country. According to Freire (2018:48-66), critically reflecting on oneself and others is a way by which we think about things, negotiate and transform the lives of those concerned by providing knowledge and skills for their survival. Abraham (2014:1) agree that critical pedagogy is a way of encouraging people to critically reflect and think about their life's circumstances and promote practices that can bring about social and economic change in their lives. To this end, the researcher defines critical pedagogy as the way in which rural women are able to think and critically examine the difficulties they are experiencing and suggest ways in which these problems can be solved to transform their lives. This principle can apply to the providers of ACET in particular to provide appropriate skills training programmes that can meet the learning needs of rural women in the country in general.

#### **5.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF ACET TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL WOMEN**

This section aims to discuss the contributions of Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) to the economic development of rural women, especially in the Mthatha district where the study was conducted. Rural women enrol in ACET programmes so that they can be empowered with livelihood skills to develop their economic lives. These women expect that ACET will contribute to their lives by empowering them to have access to employment to earn a living wage or to engage in income-generating activities. The study revealed that ACET CLCs are merely providing the women with certificates at the end of their studies or training, with the aim of these certificates being used to find jobs to earn a salary to improve their economic conditions. This practice is failing the learners because the certificates provided are

insufficient in their value to qualify the women for jobs. The investigation from the interviews revealed that most of the women who had undergone the programme remain at home after completing the programme because it hasn't empowered them with the right skills to secure jobs. What rural women actually need is for ACET to equip them with practical livelihood skills which can prepare them for self-employment or to engage in salaried employment. This notion is in line with Elliot (2008:86) who intimates that salaried employment means economic power. Through employment, rural women can earn a living wage to provide for themselves and their families in order to transform their lives economically.

Education and ACET in particular, should bring about economic change in the lives of rural women and should give them the physical and mental freedom to own their economic environment and to liberate them by providing appropriate skills training for self- and community development. Citing Bown and Tomori (1997), Quan-Baffour (2011:5) affirms this in the following statement:

“Education has to increase people's physical and mental freedom – to increase their control over themselves, their own lives and the environment in which they live. The ideas imparted by education or released in the mind through education should therefore be liberating skills. Adult education thus covers a wide range of educational activities that could assist the individual adult to become a liberated and fully developed citizen of his or her community.”

Rural women expect to see economic changes in their lives as a consequence of their involvement in ACET programmes. ACET has the capacity to equip the women with knowledge and livelihood skills which can assist them to participate in the economy of the country to improve their lives and develop their communities in the process (Aitchison, 2007, cited in Mayombe, 2015:80).

The findings from the interviews revealed that ACET has in fact made a very small contribution to the lives of rural women. For example, Basic Early Childhood

Development offered at CLCs, empowered women to run their own day-care centres. Contrary to the benefit mentioned, the findings from the documentary analysis revealed that most of the women who went through ACET programmes remain unemployed because they are poorly trained. This makes it difficult for them to be financially able and to engage in any business activities. Moreover, the study has revealed that a number of factors have contributed to rural women's poor economic development. These include the following:

- ❖ There is a lack of adequately skilled educators in the CLCs. It is important that these educators are up-skilled if ACET is to achieve its aim of providing knowledge and skills training for the educationally disadvantaged individuals in the country;
- ❖ The learning programmes provided at the s are inappropriate. The programmes offered in these centres must be in line with those offered at community colleges until the point at which the entire adult education system in the country is decentralised;
- ❖ Lacking financial support from the providers of adult education programmes;
- ❖ Inadequate teaching and learning resources; and
- ❖ Lacking infrastructure for ACET programmes.

It is important that these problems are addressed at the CLCs, particularly those found in the study area. The providers of adult education programmes can address these problems by giving rural women equitable access to basic education, adult education and effective livelihood skills training. This is a basic right that all, and particularly rural women should be able to attain for their economic development as this is enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), which says:

“Everyone has the right to a basic education including adult basic education and to further education which the state through reasonable measures must make available all forms of organised education and training that meet the basic learning needs of adults, including literacy and numeracy, as well as the general

knowledge, skills and values and attitudes that they require to survive, develop their capacities, live and work in dignity, improve the quality of their lives, make informed decisions, and continue learning.”

From the above, it is important that rural women are not denied education and training for their economic development. Bilchitz (2008:133) affirms that the citizens of any country like South Africa should not be deprived of education and training as it is necessary for socio-economic development and success in life. It is the desire of the government that rural women are successful in life; therefore, they must be given equitable access to education and training for their survival.

According to Maslow (1943:372), the success or survival of humans, be it political, social or economic, is dependent on motivation. This is why rural women, in particular, are to be motivated to learn to achieve their needs in life, one of which is economic freedom. This need has formed the focus of the present study and Maslow (1943) stressed that until it is satisfied, rural women will not seek any other need in their life. It is important, therefore, that they are developed economically by equipping them with skills through the provision of ACET. According to Baatjes and Chaka (2012:5) as well as the DHET (2013:1), ACET is aimed at educating the poor, the disadvantaged and particularly rural women so that they can be transformed through education for personal, social, political and economic gains. DHET (2017:11) affirms that ACET provides programmes that can help rural women to develop economically and promote community cohesion and socio-economic well-being. The economic development of rural women is indeed an important aspect of their lives, warranting the drive to give them access to adult education and skills training for the social and economic change they so strongly desire in their lives.

## **5.5 THE ROLE OF ACET IN POVERTY REDUCTION AMONG RURAL WOMEN**

Poverty is a serious social issue which affects the majority of rural women in South Africa. It leads to marginalisation, abuse, low self-esteem and unfair treatment, which is

why rural women require basic education, knowledge and skills for poverty alleviation or mitigation. The poor conditions under which rural women are found enable one to define the concept of poverty from multiple perspectives. According to Mbuli (2009:4), poverty can be defined in the context of absolute, relative or chronic poverty. In any case, the researcher defines poverty as the inability of rural women to provide for themselves and their families because they are unable to engage in economic activities to provide for life's basic needs. These may include good drinking water, food, clothing and shelter. This section, therefore, discusses how ACET has contributed to the mitigation of poverty among rural women.

It is important to note that for rural women to achieve success in poverty reduction, access to skills training, employment, education and ACET, in particular, is necessary. The study revealed that many rural women lack access to education, training and employment. The finding agrees with Spaul (2015:36) by mentioning that the poor, especially those found in the rural areas of South Africa, are noted for the lowest levels of education because of having been denied basic education. ACET can compensate for this shortfall in the education of rural women and, therefore, they should be given the required access and opportunity. Denying rural women access to education not only increases the country's poverty levels, but can also cause social problems. This is in support of Aitchison and Aliduo (2008) when they postulate that a lack of access to education can lead to social problems which are linked to health matters such as HIV/AIDS and can affect a country's development. To avoid these situations and alleviate poverty among rural women, it is important that they are given access and opportunities to education, ACET especially, as it will be of great value in their lives.

According to Preece (2010:482), when rural women are educated and skilled they are in a better position to access employment and educate their children to prevent generational poverty. However, the findings from the documentary analysis validated the findings from the interviews and thus, revealed that many rural women are unemployed despite having undergone the ACET programmes because the institution has failed to provide them with livelihood skills for poverty reduction. The fact that the

women cannot find jobs after their studies suggests that the training they receive is inadequate and it is also likely that many of them will drop out of their education. This situation has serious consequences for these women and their families, such as the misuse of drugs and alcohol, ill health, loss of self-esteem and inability to participate in the economy. Panday et al. (2012:102) affirm that unemployed women face many social problems and struggle to participate meaningfully in the country's economy. Equipping rural women with skills to enable them to participate in economic activities can go a long way in reducing poverty, but because they are denied access to education they are unable to engage in livelihood activities for poverty reduction.

Without education and training, rural women will continue to be unemployed and will remain vulnerable in their respective communities, leaving many of them in extreme poverty. Banerjee et al. (2008:51) emphasise that rural women constitute the largest population group living in extreme poverty. The researcher opines that to free rural women from the state of poverty, it is important that they are not denied access to basic education and training. Access to education and ACET, in particular, is the answer to the mitigation of poverty amongst rural women. This corroborates the views of Christensen et al. (2007:347-349) as well as Armstrong et al. (2008:16) that access to education in general is the answer to the problems of rural women, especially poverty. It assists them to participate in the social and economic mainstream of the country in an effort to alleviate poverty and it is consequently extremely important for them to be empowered socio-economically through skills training for poverty reduction.

It has been emphasised in this study that most rural women in South Africa are affected by unemployment and poverty due to a lack of knowledge and skills. In such a situation, progressive leadership should grant the poor, especially rural dwellers, first priority on the national developmental agenda. After the demise of apartheid, the ANC government took such progressive steps in giving first priority to the majority of poor people living in the countryside. According to the ANC (1994:12):

“No political democracy can survive and flourish if the majority of its people remain in poverty, without land, without their basic needs being met and without tangible prospects for a better life. Attacking poverty and deprivation will, therefore, be the first priority of the democratic Government.”

Eradicating or reducing poverty among rural women is critical to their socio-economic development, which is why the post-apartheid government has put in place developmental programmes targeting poverty alleviation among rural women in the country. The results from the documentary analysis based on ACET and Post-school policy documents revealed some examples of such programmes which may include, but are not limited to the following:

- ❖ **Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Programme:** This is a mass literacy programme which is aimed at educating millions of adults, particularly rural women who are functionally illiterate and require literacy education for better living conditions (McKay, 2012; 2015).
- ❖ **Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET):** ACET is a programme established by DHET in 2012 at the release of the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training (PSET) (Baatjes & Baatjes, 2008:5). It aims to provide education for disadvantaged people, particularly rural women, for personal, social, political and economic development (Baatjes & Chaka, 2012:5; DHET, 2017:11).
- ❖ **The Provision of Basic Education:** Basic education is an innovative tool aimed at reducing poverty among the poor, especially rural women (Quan-Baffour, 2012:1).

A full discussion of these programmes, as relating to this study, can be found in section 2.3.3.4. These programmes, ACET, in particular, are a response to the need for poverty reduction among the majority of rural women in contemporary South Africa.

## 5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter endeavoured to discuss the study's findings, aligning them with the literature discussed in Chapter 2. This was done in order for the results to emerge more clearly with respect to the stated aims and objectives, and the overall investigation of the problem. The emergent findings of the study were discussed based on themes derived from the data analysis. The themes included the following:

- ❖ Contributions of ACET to the empowerment of rural women;
- ❖ The role of ACET in the skills development of rural women;
- ❖ Contributions of ACET to the economic development of rural women; and
- ❖ The role of ACET in poverty reduction among rural women.

The themes were discussed in detailed and aligned with the literature study to corroborate the findings. The next chapter presents summaries of the main sections of the study, providing a general conclusion and making recommendations based on the findings of the study.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter (5) discussed the findings and related these to the literature review. The present and the concluding chapter (6) provide a summary of the results from the literature review, the interviews and the documentary analysis. The results presented are based on the interpreted data collected from participants who were involved in and have undergone ACET programmes. The chapter also provides a general conclusion to the study and makes recommendations arising from the findings.

#### **6.2 GENERAL SUMMARY**

Women's disempowerment is a global phenomenon and South Africa is no exception. Many rural women in the country lack basic education and skills for survival and as a result, are unemployed and live in poverty. Mayer et al. (2011:7) affirm that in South Africa, the majority of rural women are unemployed and live in extreme poverty because they lack education and skills. For this reason, ACET is seen as an instrument for socio-economic change and transformation (DHET, 2013; 2017). According to Shor (2012:15), adult education is a powerful means for bring about socio-economic change in the lives of rural women, necessitating the integration of skills training into adult education programmes for social, political and economic empowerment.

The creation of opportunities for rural women to access education and training is an important means to foster social cohesion and overcome social injustice, hence reducing poverty. In addition, it strengthens economic growth (UNESCO, 2009a:24), primarily with regard to universal primary education (UPE) and the reduction of gender inequalities. Blanden et al. (2009:4) concur that educated women are better positioned to improve their chances in life and to enhance their standard of living. Women who are educated and skilled have increased opportunities to employment, to undertake self-

employment projects or work, or to bring about improvements in their occupationally-based social status. The researcher observed, first-hand, the poor socio-economic conditions of rural women in the Mthatha district, noting that the lack of skills training for economic development had led to the high rate of poverty among these women. Since ACET has been established to remedy this situation, this study sought to investigate how, if at all, ACET has improved the socio-economic lives of the rural women of Mthatha through programmes aimed at empowerment.

The study was conducted on the assumption that unemployment, poverty and vulnerability characterises the lives of many rural women in South Africa due to their lack of basic knowledge and skills. The empowerment of rural women through skills training for economic development and poverty reduction is, therefore, a major concern among many citizens in the country today. The desire to have a deeper understanding of the situation and to suggest solutions motivated the researcher to engage in this empirical study.

Against this backdrop, Chapter 1 presented a general overview of the study and laid bare the problem under investigation. The study, therefore, aimed to explore how ACET has enhanced socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction in Mthatha, South Africa.

Chapter 2 presented the theoretical framework and literature review, stopping to discuss various theories such as that of Maslow's Theory of Motivation, Critical Pedagogy and Empowerment Theory, and describing how they relate to the study. The literature review was discussed against the background of certain themes relating to the study's objectives. These themes include: apartheid policy and lack of basic education and skills for rural women; Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) and community development; as well as poverty alleviation among rural women.

The research design and methodology used for the investigation were discussed in Chapter 3. A qualitative research approach and an exploratory design were employed

for purposes of conducting the research. The sampled participants were purposively selected for the study and the main instruments used to collect data for the study were interviews, focus group discussion and documentary analysis.

Chapter 4 aimed to give information on the data analysis and the presentation of the results. The results presented were based on the aims and objectives of the study, and three different instruments were used to gather the study's data.

Chapter 5 was devoted to discussing the findings, which were presented under various themes which were in line with the study objectives. The information from the literature review was used to compare the results that emerged from the investigation.

This final chapter (6) provides a summary of the major findings from the literature review, the interviews and the documentary analysis. The implications of the study for the field of adult education were also presented in this chapter. It discusses the limitations of the study and makes a general conclusion, offering recommendations based on the study's findings.

## **6.2.1 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to explore the socio-economic empowerment of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction. A review of relevant literature on the topic was done to help the researcher understand the study's context and to get clarity on how to address the stated research questions and aims (see section 1.4.1). The main findings from the literature study are summarised under the sub-sections below.

### **6.2.1.1 Apartheid policy and lack of basic education and skills for rural women**

The South African education system and its educational policies during the apartheid regime left many black families hopeless because they lacked basic education and skills for survival in post-apartheid South Africa. According to McKay (2007:287), the

apartheid government disadvantaged many black South Africans educationally so that they could only work on white-owned farms and factories. The education provided for black South Africans was of a lower quality and different from that provided for whites and it is this condition that led to the lack of basic education and skills among native South Africans, especially rural women. Aitchison (2006:90) affirms that in 2006 there were 26 million adults who required basic education and skills training in post-apartheid South Africa (see Table 2.1, p. 48).

The call for adult education in democratic South Africa was to redress the harm that had been done to its citizens. Denying native blacks the right to basic education had caused, for example, a very high rate of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty. Basic knowledge and skills training, therefore, became important, especially for rural women to gain meaningful employment or to engage in self-employment activities to achieve social and economic freedom.

#### **6.2.1.2 ACET and community development**

The literature review made it clear that adult education in general and ACET, in particular, is a process by which rural women can become equipped with vocational knowledge and skills for self and community development (Jinna & Maikano, 2014:36). The main aim is to correct the educational wrongs of the past and give rural women access and opportunities to quality basic education and skills training for community development. According to Festus and Adekola (2015:3), adult education or ACET can help rural women to acquire knowledge and livelihood skills for self-advancement. Many rural women, however, lack the skills for their development because the provision of adult education has been shelved or poorly managed (Aitchison, 2004:14). It is important that adult education is given priority as it has value for community development. Singh (2005:ix) and Erasmus (2010:2) intimate that:

“adult education is valuable in that its learning activities provide knowledge, skills and moral consciousness that participants need for participation in social and economic activities in their various communities.”

Indeed, rural women need to be equipped with knowledge and skills for self-employment, as well as economic and community development because they lack the education and skills to do so in and of themselves.

#### **6.2.1.3 Poverty alleviation among rural women**

The majority of these rural women who are the focus of the study are abused, marginalised, have low self-esteem and are prone to unfair treatment because they lack basic education and skills. As a result, many of them live in poverty, which restricts them from having a better life. McKay and Vizard (2006:48) intimate that the denial of basic human needs is a gross violation of human rights which can be linked to a lack of socio-economic rights. It is important that rural women are not directly or indirectly denied access to fulfilling basic human needs and socio-economic rights such as the right to food, clean drinking water, health care services and shelter, as these are essential to raise their standard of living. Bilchitz (2008:133) affirms that citizens of any country, South Africans in particular, should not be deprived of their basic human needs and socio-economic rights as these are necessary for improving the standard of living of many rural dwellers. Rural women, therefore, must be given access and opportunities to education, especially through Adult and Community Education and Training (ACET) (DHET, 2013:1), so that they are equipped with knowledge and skills for poverty alleviation.

### **6.3 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS**

The main instruments used in the data collection process were interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis. The investigation was conducted in accordance

with the study's research questions and aims (see section 1.4.1 p.10). The summary of the study's main findings are briefly presented under the themes below:

### **6.3.1 Contributions of ACET to the empowerment of rural women**

The study revealed that the majority of rural women have enrolled in ACET programmes with the aim that they can be empowered with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to work and take care of themselves and their families. To be economically active, the women require training in practical livelihood skills such as carpentry, fashion design, arts and crafts, as well as computer training. These skills can empower rural women to engage in livelihood activities for socio-economic transformation. This study has determined that empowerment is a means of equipping educationally disadvantaged individuals, especially rural women, with knowledge and skills for a better life. In spite of the provision of ACET, the majority of rural women have not been empowered because the programmes provided at many of the ACET satellite learning centres are irrelevant to their learning needs. In order for rural women to be empowered, they must be equipped with practical livelihood skills to enable them to change their circumstances. Kabeer (2011:499-500) affirms that programmes for empowering rural women should seek to transform their social, economic and personal well-being and should take complete responsibility for the changes they require in their lives. Contrary to this noble ideal the study has revealed that many of the centres do not teach their adult learners employment skills. It is imperative that ACET programmes teach adults practical skills that can make them economically independent and can help them to contribute to nation building.

The findings also indicate that many rural women are unable to access ACET programmes because they are financially handicapped. Most of the women do not have money to transport themselves to attend classes because the community learning centres are situated far away from them. Furthermore, there are those who depend on their families for financial support because they are unemployed. Supporting this revelation from the study, Kaur and Singh (2017:20) mention that the majority of rural

women still lack access to finance, education and training. Beaman et al. (2018:1) affirm that the lack of access to basic education and training has led to the marginalisation of many women in their respective communities. This reveals that the rural women involved in ACET programmes are not being empowered with the relevant knowledge and skills for creating a livelihood. The study highlights that to make ACET programmes more appropriate and relevant, rural women must be involved in designing their own curriculum. This can be done through community forums and partnerships between the ACET learners and the providers of adult education. Meetings must be arranged where rural women can be given the opportunities to share their ideas and views on the curriculum; views that can ultimately be translated into ways in which they can draw benefit.

### **6.3.2 The role of ACET in the skills development of rural women**

The research determined that ACET, especially as found in the satellite Community Learning Centres (CLCs), is not playing a strong enough role in providing skills training for learners. Skills' training is what rural women need for them to be employable or to engage in self-employment for a more meaningful life. It was brought to light that the programmes offered at the satellite CLCs are irrelevant to the needs of the women and that the women are not being trained in livelihood skills but instead receive instruction in subjects like basic Early Childhood Care, Life Orientation, English and Mathematical Literacy, subjects that are poorly taught by uneducated teachers. Other important information revealed by the findings constitutes inadequate storage facilities and lacking financial support from the government to provide teaching and learning materials for skills training. Romm and Dichaba (2015:235) affirm that there is a general lack of support for adult education programmes which seek to equip rural women with livelihood skills.

### **6.3.3 Contributions of ACET to the economic development of rural women**

ACET aims to contribute to the economic development of rural women by equipping them with knowledge and skills, which is why they enrol on the programmes. The findings, however, indicate that Community Learning Centres are merely providing the participants from rural areas (women) with literacy certificates, with which they are to find jobs and earn salaries to develop themselves economically. The certificates provided, however, are quite meaningless and do not assist ACET graduates to access jobs. The lack of practical training opportunities by ACET results in most of its graduates being unemployable. For example, the study revealed that the training the women received in Early Childhood Care is inadequate for them to run their own day care centres, and, consequently, many of them remain unemployed or unemployable. The study presented a number of factors which contribute to the lack of economic development of rural women, these being:

- ❖ Insufficient numbers of skilled educators at satellite CLCs;
- ❖ Inappropriate learning programmes provided at the satellite centres;
- ❖ Insufficient financial support from the providers of adult education;
- ❖ Inadequate teaching and learning resources; and
- ❖ Poor infrastructure for ACET programmes.

### **6.3.4 The role of ACET in poverty reduction among rural women**

The study revealed that the majority of rural women live in extreme poverty because they lack skills to access paying jobs or engage in income-generating activities. The ACET programme does not teach the rural women practical job-oriented skills and this leaves them hopeless as there are no opportunities for them to seize upon. Due to lack of skills for employment, many ACET graduates also lack basic needs such as those for food, water, clothing and shelter. Spaul (2015:34) emphasises that the majority of these rural women are poor because of lacking basic education. To help reduce poverty among them, the study revealed that they must be provided with opportunities to



become trained in practical skills such as sewing, knitting, baking, word processing (computers), dressmaking etc. Despite the provision of ACET, rural women remain unemployed because the institution has failed to teach them livelihood skills. It is important for rural women to be taught appropriate skills for employment and not merely to be able to hand them literacy certificates.

## **6.4 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS**

Documentary analysis was one of the main instruments used by the researcher to collect data. The rationale for using this technique was to triangulate the findings from the interviews and focus group discussions. Descriptive content analysis was used to identify and describe information gathered in a systematic manner (Sarantakos, 2005, cited in Mayombe, 2014:113). Information was gathered from the government gazette, policy on ACET documents, centre registers, learner and educator profile documents, and admission records. The summary of the findings from the analysis of these documents is presented below:

### **6.4.1 Demographic profiling of research participants**

#### **6.4.1.1 Learners interviewed**

The documentary analysis revealed that all the interview participants were unemployed. Two-thirds of them (n=35) have the responsibility to care for the needs of their children, and their ages ranged from 19 – 40 years. This suggests that the learners are adults with full adult responsibilities who need practical skills for their livelihoods. They expressed the hope that ACET can equip them with livelihood skills, which in all likelihood constitutes the major reason for their enrolling on ACET programmes. The documentary analysis revealed that the majority of adult learners are unemployed, meaning that many of them lack the financial means to travel to the learning centres to participate in learning activities for skills training. The study also found that ACET

centres should be established close to the majority of the learners to enable equal access to education and training since this may reduce dropout among learners.

#### **6.4.1.2 Former ACET learners interviewed**

The seven former ACET learners who were interviewed revealed that the majority of them (n=5 out of n=7) remained unemployed after graduating from the ACET programme. Only one of these learners reported having found employment as a kitchen assistant but that job was not sufficient for satisfying her immediate needs. It was also found that one of the former ACET learners had advanced her studies. This suggests that the certificate received at the end of the ACET programme does not help the learners to gain meaningful employment or to engage in self-employment activities unless they further their studies. To be more skilled and knowledgeable for the world of work, there is a need to enhance the content of the ACET certificate.

#### **6.4.1.3 Focus group discussion with adult learners**

Four learners were selected from four different CLCs to engage in a focus group discussion, with ages ranging from 22 to 35 years. All of these participants were unemployed and have families to care of, thus having enrolled in ACET with the hope that it would empower them with skills to access income-generating activities. It was revealed, however, that the women were not benefitting from the ACET programmes because they are not being equipped with practical livelihood skills. This means that the ACET programmes are not structured in such a way that they meet the learning needs of the women, which is why they remain unskilled and unemployable.

#### **6.4.1.4 ACET educators interviewed**

The information obtained from the interviews revealed that the educators were professionally qualified to teach in ACET centres and had teaching experience ranging between 4 and 11 years. However, not all the educators were qualified to teach at level

four of the ACET programmes and lacked practical knowledge and skills training themselves. This condition explains why practical skills' training is not being imparted at ACET training centres. It was also revealed that most of the women are disappointed in the programmes offered at the ACET centres because they are not being empowered with the necessary skills to be economically active.

#### **6.4.2 ACET centre curricula**

The documentary analysis revealed that the ACET curriculum comprises of:

- ❖ English (LLC2);
- ❖ Xhosa (LLC1);
- ❖ Mathematical Literacy;
- ❖ Life Orientation;
- ❖ Early Childhood Development; and
- ❖ Ancillary.

These subjects must be integrated into skills training programmes to empower rural women. The providers of ACET programmes should restructure the curriculum to include practical job skills for economic transformation. Quan-Baffour (2011:95) affirms that the knowledge and skills that adult learners acquire from their training must be used to re-think their living conditions. To achieve this goal, therefore, the curriculum of rural women should include but not be limited to the following:

- ❖ Agricultural studies (consisting of crop and animal farming);
- ❖ Fashion design;
- ❖ Catering;
- ❖ Sewing;
- ❖ Carpentry;
- ❖ Electrical skills;
- ❖ Painting;

- ❖ Auto mechanics;
- ❖ Arts and crafts; and
- ❖ Ceramic / pottery.

The list above includes some of the courses that have been initiated in community colleges established by DHET (DHET, 2013:1), but which have not yet been implemented nationally. To provide the skills needed for employment, the department of education should employ qualified educators to teach the unemployed women self-employment skills, or else ACET will always remain irrelevant to unemployed adults.

## **6.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION**

The study has major implications for the field of Adult Education. The fact that many South African citizens, particularly rural dwellers, lack basic education and training means that ACET is the best tool for socio-economic emancipation. Many developing countries like South Africa have adopted this tool to develop their citizens educationally and to correct the wrongs of the past. ACET programmes have now been initiated in community colleges established in the nine provinces of South Africa. This is a step in the right direction, but the study has revealed that many of the ACET CLCs have been neglected in this regard. The programmes offered at the learning centres are not relevant to the needs of the women and consequently this study hopes to inform the providers of ACET programmes so as to ensure they make the necessary adaptations to meet the learning needs of rural women. There is thus a very urgent need for the providers of adult education to critically assess and structure their programmes accordingly.

Another important revelation of the study is that the majority of educators found in ACET centres do not themselves have the required knowledge and practical skills to teach their learners. It is this condition which has contributed to the lack of skills, especially in the rural areas. Therefore, the educators in the field of Adult Education must be

appropriately trained or up-skilled to impart the knowledge and skills required by their learners.

## **6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study employed a small sample which was limited to only four community learning centres. Although this is generally accepted in a qualitative research study (Niccolai et al., 2016:843-844; Saunders et al., 2018:1902), the findings cannot be generalised because there are many other learning centres in the country as a whole. However, the aim was to understand the lived experiences of the participants which can as well relate to the majority of ACET learning centres in the country.

Rural communities are indeed the most disadvantaged when it comes to education and training. As a result, many rural women lack knowledge and skill for socio-economic advancement. As the study was limited to investigate the socio-economic development of rural women, it did not look into the socio-economic conditions of women living in urban areas. One cannot say with certainty that all women living in urban areas lead better lives than those in the rural areas, unless an investigation is conducted to ascertain the fact. This study, therefore, served as an eye-opener into the issue raised.

Furthermore, the study was biased as it did not investigate the socio-economic development of both men and women, but only looked at the situation of rural women. Consequently there is also the need to conduct studies in South Africa that will address socio-economic issues relating to gender. This study based on women only drew awareness to the fact that men equally require better education and training in relevant skills to improve their socio-economic lives.

## **6.7 CONCLUSION**

This study which explored the socio-economic development of rural women through skills training for poverty reduction has yielded several important findings as based on

the research questions and objectives. The study revealed that rural women require life skills such as carpentry, computer training, tailoring and arts and craft with which to be empowered for socio-economic transformation. However, ACET centres are not providing the women with these needed skills for survival. Given that most of the women are unemployed, financial problems made it difficult for them to access ACET programmes. The study also revealed that ACET has failed in its role of empowering women with life skills to engage in self-employment work because the programmes offered to them do not teach job skills. Without training in livelihood skills, rural women will continue to be dependent on others for their basic needs in life. The findings have further indicated that women in rural areas require economic freedom and it is for this reason that they have enrolled for ACET programmes. ACET aimed to equip women with skills to engage in economic activities to improve their lives. Conversely, the programmes provided by ACET do not meet the learning needs of the women. The failure of ACET and a lack of skills have left many rural women living in extreme poverty. To help reduce poverty among the women, the study revealed that they must be trained in job-oriented skills which can help them generate income to better their lives and their families. The majority of women who were disadvantaged educationally are found in rural areas. The study, therefore, concludes that ACET centres must be equipped with tools, resources and well-qualified educators to provide unemployed adults with skills training for self-employment or else unemployment and poverty will never abate.

## **6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher suggests the following recommendations as per the study's objectives and having emanated from the findings stated below. His recommendations are to;

- ❖ Fortify ACET programmes in community learning centres, especially with empowerment programmes that can up-skill rural women who enrol in the programmes for socio-economic development and for poverty reduction.

- ❖ Make ACET centres accessible to people who need to gain practical skills for self-employment.
- ❖ Involve women in rural areas when it comes to designing the curricula that seek to empower them. This can be done through community forums and partnerships between ACET learners and the providers of adult education.
- ❖ Tailor-made ACET programmes in community learning centres to include skills training programmes that can improve the employability of rural women or can empower them to become self-employed for poverty reduction.
- ❖ Employ skilled educators to teach ACET learners and trained unskilled educators employed in special skills through educator empowerment programmes at technical universities and TVET colleges.

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APPENDIX A: UNISA ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/09/13

Dear Mr Tawiah

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2017/09/16 to 2022/09/13

Ref: **2017/09/13/3445419/28/MC**

Name: Mr S Tawiah

Student: 34454519

**Researcher:**

Name: Mr S Tawiah

Email: tawiahsampson13@gmail.com

Telephone: 0732202143

**Supervisor:**

Name: Prof KP Quan-Baffour

Email: quanbkp@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 012 4842802

**Title of research:**

**Socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction: An exploratory study of rural women in Mthatha, South Africa**

**Qualification:** PhD in Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/09/13 to 2022/09/13.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/09/13 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and



principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2022/09/13. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

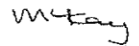
*Note:*

*The reference number **2017/09/13/3445419/28/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Dr M Claassens**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



**Prof V McKay**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**



Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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## APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

### A LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT ACET CENTRES UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Title of research: **Socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction: an exploratory study of rural women in Mthatha, South Africa.**

05/03/2018

The Centre Manager  
Mgobozi Community Learning Centre  
Mthatha Plaza  
5148

Dear Sir/Madam

I, **Sampson Tawiah** am doing research under supervision of **Prof Kofi Poku Quan-Baffour**, a Professor in the Department of Adult Basic Education towards a PhD (Education) at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled 'Socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction: an exploratory study of rural women in Mthatha, South Africa.

The aim of the study is to investigate the extent of how ACET programmes have enhanced women empowerment, skills training, economic development and poverty reduction in the Mthatha district.

Your department has been selected because it is the most convenient and can serve the purpose of the research study.

The study will entail women participants who are involved in the programmes and information will be collected by means of a face to face and focus group interviews.

The benefits of this study are to establish and to raise awareness of the concerns of participants identified by the researcher. Recommendations will be made to various stake holders especially government to come to the aid of ACET institutions and all those involved.

There is no sensitive information involved in the study and there is no risk to participants.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback will be made available to the department concerned and in turn pass on to participants.

Yours sincerely

Sampson Tawiah

## APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

### Mgobozi Community Learning Centre

P.O Box 107

Mthatha Plaza

5148

Mr Sampson Tawiah  
University of South Africa  
Department of Adult Basic Education  
Pretoria

Dear MrTawiah

#### RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN MTHATHA DISTRICT

RESEARCH TOPIC: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN MTHATHA, SOUTH AFRICA.

I am pleased to inform you that permission has been granted for you to conduct your study in our adult learning centres in the Mthatha district. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is in support of such research studies to enhance national development.

However, please be advised that any financial loss incurred in the course of the study will be the full responsibility of the researcher. Yet, we will be pleased to have you share your findings with the department.

We wish you well with your study and should you encounter any problem, do not hesitate to liaise with the department and district concerned.

Yours sincerely

P Magwentshu(Miss)

0783136444

DEPT. OF EDUCATION  
ABET DIRECTORATE  
MGOBOZI COMMERCIAL  
ADULT CENTRE  
DATE: 10/04/2018  
SIGNATURE: [Signature]

**APPENDIX D: REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW**  
**LETTER REQUESTING AN ADULT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW**

Dear **Participant**

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, **Sampson Tawiah**, am conducting as part of my research as a doctoral student entitled 'Socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction: an exploratory study of rural women in Mthatha, at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by the department of Adult Education and Training and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of this study is to bring to notice the problem of poverty, lack of skills and what can be done to reduce unemployment among women. Your participation is to help the researcher explore the lack of empowerment of women, skills training, economic development and poverty reduction in the Mthatha district. This research topic in education is substantial and well documented. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve the programmes at ACET centres and benefit all those who are involved. Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 30 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All

information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 5 years in my locked office.

The benefits of this study are to draw awareness of the persisting problems of lack of empowerment, skills training, low economic development, unemployment and poverty. It will also recommend to various stakeholders in the provision of ACET programmes the findings of the study to draw up policies to benefit the women involved in ACET programmes and there are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the research. If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact **Sampson Tawiah** on **0732202143** or email **[tawiahsampson13@gmail.com](mailto:tawiahsampson13@gmail.com)**. The findings are accessible for six months.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at **0732202143** or by e-mail at **[tawiahsampson13@gmail.com](mailto:tawiahsampson13@gmail.com)**.

I look forward to speaking to you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Sampson Tawiah', written over a faint circular stamp.

Sampson Tawiah

**APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FEMALE LEARNERS**

**RESEARCH TOPIC: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN MTHATHA, SOUTH AFRICA.**

**RESEARCHER: SAMPSON TAWIAH**

**PROMOTER: PROF KOFI POKU QUAN-BAFFOUR**

**Semi-Structured interview guide for female participants.**

Thank you for your voluntary participation and time. The purpose of this interview is to explore socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction of rural women in the Mthatha District. This investigation will require you to give clear and detailed information to the interview questions.

**ACET AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

1a. What empowerment programmes are you involved in at the centre?

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1b. Is there anything that restricts you from attaining education and training?

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2. In which way is the ACET centre empowering rural women in your community?



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3. How can women be involved in designing the curriculum that can empower them via ACET programmes?

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4. Briefly explain any problem you have observed with the empowerment programmes at the centre you attend lessons and give suggestions to improve the programmes.

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### **ACET AND SKILLS TRAINING**

5a. What skills building programmes does your centre currently offer its learners?

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5b. State which programme you are involved in?

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6a. What specific skills have you acquired from this programme?

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6b. How can the programme benefit you?

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7. Do you have full access to the skills training programme? If No give reasons

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8. What factors prevent your participation in ACET programmes?

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## **ACET AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

9. In which way can ACET programmes improve your living conditions?

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10. How will the training enable you to engage in an income generating activity?

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11. What knowledge and skills can enhance your economic development?

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12. What factors hinder your learning of skills for economic development?

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### **ACET AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

13. How have ACET programmes helped women in your community to gain employment for poverty reduction?

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14. What do you think can be done to solve the problem of women who are living in poverty?

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15. How does poverty affect women and their families?

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**APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PREVIOUS LEARNERS**

RESEARCH TOPIC: **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN MTHATHA, SOUTH AFRICA.**

RESEARCHER: **SAMPSON TAWIAH**

PROMOTER: **PROF KOFI POKU QUAN-BAFFOUR**

**Semi-Structured interview guide for women participants.**

Thank you for your voluntary participation and time. The purpose of this interview is to explore socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction of rural women in the Mthatha District. This investigation will require you to give clear and detailed information to the interview questions.

**ACET AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

1a. What empowerment programmes were you involved in?

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1b. What hinders you from attaining education and training courses?

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2. In which way have the ACET programmes benefited rural women in your community?

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3. How can women be involved in designing the curriculum that can empower them via ACET programmes?

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4a. Briefly explain any problem you have observed with the empowerment programmes at the centre you attended lessons.

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4b. Give suggestions to improve the programmes.

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## **ACET AND SKILLS TRAINING**

5a. What skills building programmes does your centre currently offer its learners?

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5b. State which programme you were involved in?

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6a. What specific skills did you acquire from the programme?

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6b. How have the programme benefited you?

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7. Did you have full access to the skills training programme? If No give reasons

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8. What factors prevented your participation in ACET programmes?

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## **ACET AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

9. In which way have ACET programmes improve your living conditions?

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10. How has the training enable you to engage in an income generating activity?

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11. What knowledge and skills can enhance your economic development?

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12. What factors hindered your learning of skills for economic development?

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## **ACET AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

13. How have ACET programmes helped women in your community to gain employment for poverty reduction?

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14. What do you think can be done to solve the problem of women who are living in poverty?

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15. How does poverty affect women and their families?

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**APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS**

**RESEARCH TOPIC: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN MTHATHA, SOUTH AFRICA.**

**RESEARCHER: SAMPSON TAWIAH**

**PROMOTER: PROF KOFI POKU QUAN-BAFFOUR**

**Semi-Structured interview guide for female lecturers.**

Thank you for your voluntary participation and time. The purpose of this interview is to explore socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction of rural women in the Mthatha District. This investigation will require you to give clear and detailed information to the interview questions.

**ACET AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

1a. What empowerment programmes are women involved in?

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1b. Is there anything that restricts them from attaining education and training courses?

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2. In which way is the ACET centre empowering rural women in their community?

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3. How can women be involved in designing the curriculum that can empower them via ACET programmes?

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4a. Briefly explain any problem you have observed with the empowerment programmes at the centre you give lessons.

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4b. Suggest ways to improve the programmes.

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## **ACET AND SKILLS TRAINING**

5a. What skills building programmes does your centre currently offer its learners?

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5b. State which programme you are involved in?

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6a. What specific skills have the women acquired from the programmes?

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6b. How have the programme benefited them?

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7. Do the women have full access to the skills training programmes? If No give reasons

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8. What factors prevent women participation in ACET programmes?

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## **ACET AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

9. In which way can ACET programmes improve the living conditions of women?

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10. How will the training enable women to engage in an income generating activity?

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11. What knowledge and skills can enhance women economic development?

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12. What factors hinder women learning of skills for economic development?

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## **ACET AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

13. How have ACET programmes helped women in your community to gain employment for poverty reduction?

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14. What do you think can be done to solve the problem of women who are living in poverty?

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15. How does poverty affect women and their families?

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**APPENDIX H: PARTICIPANTS CONSENT FORM**  
**CONSENT FORM**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study in Adult Education and Training. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Name: (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature:



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX I: FOCUS-GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RESEARCH TOPIC: **SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SKILLS TRAINING FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF RURAL WOMEN IN MTHATHA, SOUTH AFRICA.**

RESEARCHER: **SAMPSON TAWIAH**

PROMOTER: **PROF KOFI POKU QUAN-BAFFOUR**

**Focus group discussion guide for women participants.**

Thank you for your voluntary participation and time. The purpose of this interview is to explore socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction of rural women in the Mthatha District. Your contributions are highly appreciated. This investigation will require you to give clear and detailed information to the interview questions.

### ACET AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

1a. What empowerment programmes are you involved in?

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1b. Is there anything that restricts you from attaining education and training courses?

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2. In which way is the ACET centre empowering rural women in your community?



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3. How can women be involved in designing the curriculum that can empower them via ACET programmes?

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4a. Briefly explain any problem you have observed with the empowerment programmes at the centre you attend lessons.

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4b. Give suggestions to improve the programmes.

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## **ACET AND SKILLS TRAINING**

5a. What skills building programmes does your centre currently offer its learners?

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5b. State which programme you are involved in?

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6a. What specific skills have you acquired from the programmes?

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6b. How have you benefited from the programme?

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7. Do you have full access to the skills training programme? If No give reasons

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8. What factors prevent your participation in ACET programmes?

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## **ACET AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

9. In which way can ACET programmes improve your living conditions?

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10. How will the training enable you to engage in an income generating activity?

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11. What knowledge and skills can enhance your economic development?

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12. What factors hinder your learning of skills for economic development?

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## **ACET AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

13. How have ACET programmes helped women in your community to gain employment for poverty reduction?

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14. What do you think can be done to solve the problem of women who are living in poverty?

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15. How does poverty affect women and their families?

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## APPENDIX J: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT/ASSENT FORM

I \_\_\_\_\_ grant consent/assent that the information I share during the focus group may be used by **Sampson Tawiah** for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: **Sampson Tawiah**

Researcher's Signature: 

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are an adult who gives permission you **consent** then delete assent

If you are a learner who gives permission you **assent** and then delete consent

## APPENDIX K: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ACCESS PREVIOUS LEARNERS INFORMATION

### A LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO ACCESS PREVIOUS LEARNERS INFORMATION IN SELECTED AET CENTRES.

Title of research: **Socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction: an exploratory study of rural women in Mthatha, South Africa.**

Date:

The Centre Manager  
Adult and Community Education and Training  
Mthatha District

Dear Centre Manager

I, **Sampson Tawiah** am doing research under supervision of **Prof Kofi Poku Quan-Baffour**, a Professor in the Department of Adult Basic Education towards a PhD (Education) at the University of South Africa. I am writing this letter to request permission to have access to the records of previous learners who have been selected to participate in a study entitled 'Socio-economic development through skills training for poverty reduction: an exploratory study of rural women in Mthatha, South Africa.

The aim of the study is to investigate the extent of how ACET programmes have enhanced women empowerment, skills training, economic development and poverty reduction in the Mthatha district.

Your centre has been selected because it is the most convenient and can serve the purpose of the research study.

The study will entail women participants who are involved in the programmes and information will be collected by means of a face to face and focus group interviews.

The benefits of this study are to establish and to raise awareness of the concerns of participants identified by the researcher. Recommendations will be made to various stake holders especially government to come to the aid of ACET institutions and all those involved.

There is no sensitive information involved in the study and there is no risk to participants.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback will be made available to the department concerned and in turn pass on to participants.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sampson Tawiah', written in a cursive style.

Sampson Tawiah

## APPENDIX L: PROOF OF REGISTRATION

1309

TAWIAH S MR  
P O BOX 419  
LUSIKISIKI  
4820

STUDENT NUMBER : 3445-451-9  
ENQUIRIES TEL : 0861670411  
FAX : (012) 429-4150  
eMAIL : mandd@unisa.ac.za  
2018-05-09

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT	NQF crdts	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION EXAM. DATE	CENTRE (PLACE)
TFPSD01		PhD - Education (Socio-Education)	**	E		

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

# Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations ([www.unisa.ac.za/register](http://www.unisa.ac.za/register)). Please note the new requirements for reregistration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NQF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NQF credits per year. Students registered for the MBA, MBL and DBL degrees must visit the SBL's ESOnLine for study material and other important information. Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification. Readmission rules for M&D: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 0.00

Yours faithfully,

Prof QM Temane  
Registrar (Acting)

0108 0 00 0



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